

THE
RETURNE
OF PRAYERS.

A TREATISE
WHEREIN
this Case [*How to dis-
cerne Gods answers to our pray-
ers*] is briefly resolved,
WITH
OTHER OBSERVA-
TIONS UPON PSAL. 85. 8.
concerning GODS *spea-
king* PEACE, &c.

BY THO: GOODVVIN. B.D.

HAB. 2. 1.

I will watch to see what he will say to mee.

LONDON,
Printed for R. Dawlman, and L. Fawne, at the
signe of the Brazen Serpent in Pauls
Church-yard. 1636.

THE
RETURN
OF PRAYERS.

THE
W. H. R. E. I. N.
this Case
every God
on a

WITH OTHER OBSERVATIONS
UPON THE
CONSTITUTION OF THE
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
BY
JAMES MADISON

BY TRO: OOOVVVH ED

12345678910111213141516171819202122232425262728293031323334353637383940414243444546474849505152535455565758596061626364656667686970717273747576777879808182838485868788899091929394959697989910010110210310410510610710810911011111211311411511611711811912012112212312412512612712812913013113213313413513613713813914014114214314414514614714814915015115215315415515615715815916016116216316416516616716816917017117217317417517617717817918018118218318418518618718818919019119219319419519619719819920020120220320420520620720820921021121221321421521621721821922022122222322422522622722822923023123223323423523623723823924024124224324424524624724824925025125225325425525625725825926026126226326426526626726826927027127227327427527627727827928028128228328428528628728828929029129229329429529629729829930030130230330430530630730830931031131231331431531631731831932032132232332432532632732832933033133233333433533633733833934034134234334434534634734834935035135235335435535635735835936036136236336436536636736836937037137237337437537637737837938038138238338438538638738838939039139239339439539639739839940040140240340440540640740840941041141241341441541641741841942042142242342442542642742842943043143243343443543643743843944044144244344444544644744844945045145245345445545645745845946046146246346446546646746846947047147247347447547647747847948048148248348448548648748848949049149249349449549649749849950050150250350450550650750850951051151251351451551651751851952052152252352452552652752852953053153253353453553653753853954054154254354454554654754854955055155255355455555655755855956056156256356456556656756856957057157257357457557657757857958058158258358458558658758858959059159259359459559659759859960060160260360460560660760860961061161261361461561661761861962062162262362462562662762862963063163263363463563663763863964064164264364464564664764864965065165265365465565665765865966066166266366466566666766866967067167267367467567667767867968068168268368468568668768868969069169269369469569669769869970070170270370470570670770870971071171271371471571671771871972072172272372472572672772872973073173273373473573673773873974074174274374474574674774874975075175275375475575675775875976076176276376476576676776876977077177277377477577677777877978078178278378478578678778878979079179279379479579679779879980080180280380480580680780880981081181281381481581681781881982082182282382482582682782882983083183283383483583683783883984084184284384484584684784884985085185285385485585685785885986086186286386486586686786886987087187287387487587687787887988088188288388488588688788888989089189289389489589689789889990090190290390490590690790890991091191291391491591691791891992092192292392492592692792892993093193293393493593693793893994094194294394494594694794894995095195295395495595695795895996096196296396496596696796896997097197297397497597697797897998098198298398498598698798898999099199299399499599699799899910001001100210031004100510061007100810091010101110121013101410151016101710181019102010211022102310241025102610271028102910301031103210331034103510361037103810391040104110421043104410451046104710481049105010511052105310541055105610571058105910601061106210631064106510661067106810691070107110721073107410751076107710781079108010811082108310841085108610871088108910901091109210931094109510961097109810991100110111021103110411051106110711081109111011111112111311141115111611171118111911201121112211231124112511261127112811291130113111321133113411351136113711381139114011411142114311441145114611471148114911501151115211531154115511561157115811591160116111621163116411651166116711681169117011711172117311741175117611771178117911801181118211831184118511861187118811891190119111921193119411951196119711981199120012011202120312041205120612071208120912101211121212131214121512161217121812191220122112221223122412251226122712281229123012311232123312341235123612371238123912401241124212431244124512461247124812491250125112521253125412551256125712581259126012611262126312641265126612671268126912701271127212731274127512761277127812791280128112821283128412851286128712881289129012911292129312941295129612971298129913001

[illegible]

TO
THE MUCH
HONOVRED
KNIGHT,

SIR

NATHANIEL RICH.

SIR,



*O*d, who
from all
eternitie
hath had
an infinite
Masse of
grace and glory lying by
him, to bestow upon his
Church; and did according-
ly provide a treasury and
Magazin sufficient wherein

The Epistle

Ephes. 3. 8.

to store up all, [the Bosome
of his Sonne:] in whom
are hid, riches so un-
searchable, as cannot bee
told over, much lesse spent to
all eternity.

πλυσίως

Tit. 3. 6.

Hee hath as richly shed
his holy Spirit on us: that
we, who could never have
known of any thing bequea-
thed us, nor what to pray
for as wee ought, might
both, fully from him know
all that God hath given
us; and through him lay
claime thereto, who ma-
keth intercession for us;
and so doth furnish us with
a privy key to all that Trea-
sury, which otherwise, is fast
shut up to all the world.

Through which Spirit of
of prayer, and supplicati-
ons

Dedicatory.

ons thus powred foorth,
beleevers come to bee at once
anoointed to the fellow-
ship, and execution of those
three glorious Offices of
Christ their head. Not only
1. of Priests; by offering
up their prayers, as spiri-
tuall sacrifices, acceptable
to G O D, through Jesus
Christ: but 2. of Kings;
to rule with God, *Hos. 11.*
12. Being hereby made of
Privy Councell to the King
of kings, so as their Coun-
cels, and desires exprest in
their Petitions, are said to
be fulfilled; and their de-
crees in their Prayers
made, ratified, and esta-
blisht. Nay further, by ver-
tue of this priviledge, ad-
vanced to such height of fa-

Psa. 110. 4, 5

*Iob 22. 27,
28.*

The Epistle

Hos. 12. 3, 4

*your, as by their strength
in prayer alone, to have po-
wer with God himselfe;
and not onely with him, but
also over him; and in their
wrestlings to prevaile:
Ye to command: Himselfe
hath said it; Thus saith
the Lord, the holy One of
Israel and his Maker,
A S K E of me, of things
to come, concerning my
sonnes, and concerning
the worke of my hands,
C O M M A N D y e M E,
Isai. 45. 11. which so trans-
cendent priviledge of power,
is likewise by the expresse
words of this great Charter,
universally extended unto all
transactions of this lower
part of his dominions; whe-
ther Ecclesiasticall, which
doe*

Dedicatory.

doe concerne his sonnes,
that is, his Church: or what
ever other, the more ordina-
ry works of his hands,
that appertaine to common
providence.

And for as much as these
grand affaires of this his
Kingdome, as future, and
to come, are commended to
their prayers, as their most
proper subject, about which
they are to treat, Aske of
mee of things to come:
in this respect, they shall be-
come as truly. 3. Prophets
also: though not in so full
and compleate, yet in some
kind of true resemblance;
not by foretelling, yet by
forespeaking in their pray-
ers, things that come to passe.
To demonstrate which, God,

Mat. 6. 10.

The Epistle

Psal. 25. 10

who made and upholds this world, and all things in it, by the word of his power, doth likewise rule and governe it, by the Presidents, and prescript rules, of the word of his will: exactly dispensing unto men, both rewards and punishments, according to the tenour of some or other, of his promises and threatnings, and former like proceedings therein recorded: though with such various liberty, in respect of the particulars, that his wayes remaine unsearchable and past finding out: That looke how he appointed in the heavens, those ordinances of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, by their light, heate, and motion, to rule the

Dedicatory.

the day and night, to divide, and cause the severall seasons of the yeare, and all the changes and alterations that doe passe over this animall, and naturall world. in like manner hath hee stretched out that so exceeding broad expanse of his word and law, (to which the Psalmist doth assimilate it) over this rationall world, of Angels and Men; and therein set his Statutes, and his Judgements, that by the light of Precepts, and their influences in rewards and punishments, they might order and direct these his creatures reasonable, and all their actions; also dispose, and set out all the issues of them. And seeing his Saints
they

Psal. 119.
96.

Psal. 19. 1,
3, 3, 4.
compared
with Rom.
10. 18.

The Epistle

Ier. 8. 7.

they are a people in whose hearts is his Law; and their delight is to meditate therein, both day and night, they daily calculating and observing the various aspects, conjunctions, and mixt influences of those innumerable precepts, promises, and threatnings, which themselves and others, Nations or Men, stand under; and by a Judgement thence resulting, so farre as they have attained, endeavouring to frame their supplications and petitions according to Gods will: Hence their prayers oft, full happily succeed, and aforehand doe accord, to those issues and events, that afterwards fall out. That like as it sometimes

Dedicatory.

times falls out, that the earth comes to bee just under the Sun and Moone, in some of their conjunctions; so their desires and prayers, sometimes in a direct line fall under, and subordinate-ly concurre with Gods secret purposes, and some revealed promise met in conjunction, to produce such and such effects. The Spirit also, herein helping their infirmities, sometime so guiding and directing them, by a gracious preinstinct, though unbeknowne to them, to pitch their requests upon such particulars, as God hath fully purposed to bring to passe; becomming thereby, as it were, the Spirit of prophecy unto them; respectively, in
some

The Epistle

some measure and degree.

Thus doth that great King, imploy his nearest servants, as his under-Officers, and Sherifes to serve his Writs, & executions upon his Enemies; to execute the Judgement written in his threatnings, Psalm. 149. 9. and to accomplish his mercies written also; by putting all the promises in suit; to be as man-midwives (as Hezekiahs allusion, when hee sent a visiting to the Prophet Esay, for his voice and suffrage, seemeth to import) to help and assist his promises and decrees in their travell with mercies and deliverance, when these their children doe come unto the birth, and there is no strength

Esay 37. 2,
3, 4.

Zeph .2. 2.

Dedictory.

strength to bring them forth.

In all which, they shall therefore have the honour to bee accounted Co-workers together with God, in his greatest works of wonder. And at the latter day, when that great and last Edition, both of all Gods works, and likewise ours, then compleate and finished, shall be published to all the world, they shall finde their names put to them, together with his owne; and the same by him acknowledged, to be as truly the works of their hearts and prayers, as that they are the sole worke of his hands and power. Such honour have all his Saints.

*And if all the workes of
God*

The Epistle

Psal. 77.6.

G O D are so exceeding great, and his thoughts therein so very deep, Psal. 92. 5. that every Iota of them, doth deserve our deepest studies, and intentions, and thereunto require a proper skill and wisdom, to reade his hand, peculiar unto the Saints, Ier. 6. whereunto there must be adjoined the most diligent search, and attentive observation to finde out his meaning in them; and withall a speciall inclination, and delight to be conversant therein, Thy workes are very great, sought out of those that have pleasure in them, Psal. III. 2. And if, of all the rest, those choiser pietes, his workes of mercy may
boD chal.

Dedicatory.

challenge our best regard :
in which his heart and de-
lights are most ; on which
his wisdom hath laid on
the richest workmanship, in
the most curious contrive-
ments of his love : Then
surely that selected volume
of more speciall mercies [His
Epistles :] vouchsafed in
answer to our prayers, is a-
bove all other, most exactly
to be studied, and most dili-
gently to be perused by us.
Wherein God doth unbo-
some himselfe, and lay open
his heart, more sweetly, more
familiarily unto us ; which
are directed, and in a manner
dedicated more particularly
unto our selves alone ; Many
of them written with his
owne hand, in a more imme-
diate

Mich. 7. 18.

The Epistle

Pl. 107. 43

diat maner discovered and appearing in them: and all of them come sealed with the impresse of everlasting love, and downe laden with the enclosure of the most precious tokens of his speciall favour. Who so is wise, will observe these things; and they shall understand the loving kindnesse of the Lord.

Neither have such favours, onely more of mercy in the things themselves bestowed, but are further increased to us, by being made our owne mercies, by a more peculiar title to them; by which the kindnesse in them is rendred double. For therein wee have that royall liberty to become our owne choosers,

Dedictory.

choosers, and contrivers of
our owne condition; having
all the promises throwne
downe to us, with blanks for
us to write our names in
which of them wee please;
which is the greatest liberty.
And Wee have withall his
Spirit secretly directing,
and fixing the needle of our
desires, to the same point,
wherein his great intentions
towards us doe meete with
our best good: which is in-
deed the truest liberty. And
to be made our selves, whom
we love so well, and there-
fore delight to do good unto,
the chiefest instruments un-
der him of our owne greatest
happinesse, is a priviledge,
then which, the creature is
not made capable of a more
transcen-

The Epistle

transcendent royalty. And yet when the greatest love, thus rectified, which possibly we can beare our selves, hath opened its mouth widest, and stretched our desires in praying, to their utmost compasse; then will Gods infinite vast love, not onely fill them, but doe for us above all that we are able to ask, yea to thinke; exceeding abundantly above all; as farr above, as his thoughts are above our thoughts; which is farre more then the heavens are higher then the earth.

All which, when put together, (if well considered,) how would it provoke us to call in all that precious stock of our time, thoughts, and intentions

Dedictory.

intentions which wee cast away on trifles, to lay out the choisest portion of them in this thriving trade of intercourse with God; the returns whereof, are better then the merchandise of silver, and the gaine thereof, then fine gold. It is the praying Christian that alone imployes the riches of the promises, which wee usually let lie by us like dead stocke unimproved: whilst hee, like a wise and diligent Merchant, looks abroad upon all the affaires of Iesus Christ, that are afloat here in this world, and adventures in them all; is watchfull to spy out all advantages, and with an holie prayer, intermedleth in

The Epistle

in every businesse that may bring in glory unto God, good unto the Church, grace and comfort to his owne soule. And how infinitely rich must that man needes become, that puts even Gods riches out to use, with the increase of ten Talents for one, yea an hundred fold !

The due estimate whereof, would no lesse quicken us to as diligent an inquiry, what becomes of all those goodly adventures, the prayers we make ; to listen what haven they arrive at, how, and when, and with what fraught they doe returne.

In which great duty, and most necessary property of all true Merchants, yet many of the best and greatest dealers,

Dedicatory.

lers, that are diligent enough in praying, are still found failing and deficient; that omit no gainfull opportunity of adventure, but are carelesse and unobservant of their returnes.

Some through ignorance (it may be) that this is at all a duty, or of any such importance, are carefull onely how to lade in praiers enough, not expecting to finde any of this bread cast upon the waters, untill that great and generall returne of themselves, & all the world, with joy bringing their sheaves with them. Others, though at present, many of their praiers come home after a few daies, and richly laden; yet through want

The Epistle

want of skill to reade those Bills of Exchange which God often writes in an obscurer character, they lie unregarded by them. Many when voyages prove long, (though to their greater advantage, when once they doe returne, yet in the meane time) through discouragement, they give all for lost, as we doe ships at Seawe cannot heare of. The most are commonly complaining, that their adventures still miscarry, and that little or nothing comes of all their prayers. And All are negligent of keeping their bookes of accounts, to cast up their comings in, and goings out, the one with the other. By which they lose the chiefeſt portion
of

Dedicatory.

of that comfort, which for
the present, God hath here
allotted us to live upon [the
revenues of their prayers.]

And God also, is not onely
robbed of that Custome
of his glory which should
thence accrew; but wrong-
ed also by standing still as
debtor in their accounts to
many prayers, in the return
of which he hath been credi-
tor long agoe.

I have endeavoured there-
fore in this small Treatise to
convince beleivers of the
grand importance of this du-
ty, which is so full of gaine:
To discover likewise the
causes of the neglect herein,
and remove the temptations
and discouragements which
do occasion it; and have
a briefly

The Epistle

briefly resolved such cases as doe more usually occurre in the practise of it. But principally, my desire was to give in some few experiments, and observations, which may help to teach the weaker sort, though not perfectly to reade, yet here and there to spell, (and especially out of the impressions in their own hearts) Gods meaning towards them in his answers. I have cast in some scattered calculations of broken prayers cast up, which though they wil not amount, to make generall and perfect Tables out of, yet may serve, as Instances and examples, for yong beginners, to direct them in the exercise of this most usefull skill,
and

Dedicatory.

and wisdom, how to compute and ballance their accounts by comparing their prayers and their returns together.

This small and imperfect embryo, I have presumed to send forth into the world; and directed it first of all to present its service unto you; and make an honourable and thankfull mention of your Name. Your worth deserves a more costly, large, and lasting monument for this inscription. Your owne abilities of learning, eloquence, and depth of wisdom in humane affaires, would you be perswaded to lay them out, as you are able, would erect such a remembrance and sumptuous memoriall of
a 2 you,

The Epistle

you, when you are gathered to your Fathers, as would beare some proportion to your great worth. But that which emboldred me was, the neere affinity which meditations of this nature doe hold, with those other your more retired thoughts you think to none but God and your owne soule. You have beene long a frequent and constant dealer in this blessed way of intercourse with God in private. Those that know you, know your strict observance of those exchange hours you have devoted to meet with God, and enjoy communion with Him. But above all, it was that personall obligation, under which a great and speciall

Dedicatory.

all favour from you long
since brought me, upon which
I devoted (with my selfe)
the first of my labours unto
your service. And it be-
came one great reliefe unto
my thoughts, weighing the
many inconveniences of ap-
pearing thus in publique,
that it gave so full occasion
to pay my vows thus openly
before all the world; which
having now done, God that
is rich in mercy to all that
call upon him, fill you with
all Grace, and grant all your
petitions: so prays

Your Worships
obliged to love
and serve you

THO: GOODWIN.

THE TABLE.

CHAP. 1. *The maine observation: That Gods people are diligently to observe the answers of their prayers. Pag. 5*

The sinfulness of the neglect hereof demonstrated by seven reasons. 7

1. reas. An ordinance of God taken in vain. *ibid.*

2. reas. Gods attributes taken in vain. 12

3. reas. God in answering made to speake in vaine. 16

4. reas. God provoked not to answer. 19

5. reas. We shall not returne thanks. 21

6. reas. We shall lose much experience. 23

1. Of Gods faithfulness. *ibid.*

2. Of our own wayes towards him. 25

7. reas. We shall lose much comfort. 28

CHAP. 2. *Three Cases: The first concerning prayers for such promises as may bee accomplished in ages to come. 31*

1. ¶ Such prayers the Church to come doth reape. 33

2. ¶ Yet wee at present may have an answer about them. 39

3. ¶ In heaven, and at the last day wee shall rejoyce for their accomplishment. 40

CHAP.

THE TABLE.

CHAP. 3. *Second Case: Concerning prayers made for others of our friends, &c.*

How answered.

P. 42

1 § Such prayers oft granted. 44

2 § Yet not alwayes in the very thing prayed for. 46

Such promises but indefinite. 49

As all temporall promises are 51

Our faith towards them not required to be assurance. 53

Vnlesse God give a speciall faith 58

3 § Such prayers returned into our owne bosomes. 61

4 § God in the end casts some out of our prayers 65

5 § Those prayers answered in some others. 68

CHAP. 4. *Third Case: How the influence of our owne prayers, when others pray also for the same thing with us, may bee discerned.*

1 § If our hearts are affected with the same holy affection 72

Vnbeknowne each to other. 75

2 § By some speciall endeavor: as,

1 Some notable circumstance. 76

2 By joy in the accomplishment. 79

3 By thankfulnessse for the accomplishment. 81

2 4

3 § This

THE TABLE.

- 3 § This lesse to be doubted when the thing prayed for by us doth concerne our owne particular. p. 82

CHAP. 5 *Common directions helpfull in all cases, and prayers: taken first from observations from Before and In praying.* p. 85

- 1 § B E F O R E: when God prepares the heart. 86

Difference between Satans motions to prayer and Gods. 89

- 2 § I N prayer: Gods *speaking*s in prayer are evidences of hearing: and discerned by 4 things. 93

1 Giving a quietnes by prayer about the thing prayed for. *ibid*

- 3 § 2 By revealing his love, in and upon such petitions. 99

A caution herein. 103

Reasons why God draws nigh when he grants not the thing 104

- 4 § 3 God sometimes gives a particular assurance. 107

A caution herein. 111

- 5 § 4 By giving a restlesse importunity to pray for a particular mercy. 117

CHAP. 6 *Observations made upon the disposition of the heart A F T E R prayer: Vntill the ISSVE of the thing prayed for*

p. 119

1 § When

THE TABLE.

1 § When God gives an obedient dependant heart. pag. 119

2 § When God gives an heart waiting for and expecting it. 123

CHAP. 7 Observations made AFTER prayer Upon the ISSUE first If Accomplisht: whether as the fruit of prayer, or of common providence. 125

1 § God sometimes answers the prayer in the very thing and manner desired. 126

2 § Directions to discern that things thus obtained are in answer to prayers. 134

1 From the manner of Gods performance.

A more then ordinary hand discovered in things accomplished by prayer, instanced in 5. particulars. Ibid

1 By bringing it to passe through difficulties. 135

2 By facilitating all meanes. 137

3 Effecting it suddenly. 139

4 With addition of other mercies above what was desired. 141

5 By some speeciall circumstance as a token of his hand in it, 142

3 § 2 From the Time, wherein it is accomplished. 146

As first when we were most instant in prayer. 147

2 In the fittest time for us, Then, 150

1 When

THE TABLE.

- 1 When we have most need. 151
2 When the heart was best prepared to receive it. 154
4 § 3 From the proportion which may be observed betwixt Gods dealings in the accomplishment, and our prayers. 158
CHAP. 8. Seven observations more, from the Effects, which the accomplishment of the mercy hath upon the heart. 163
1 § If it draw the heart nearer to God. *ibid*
2 § Enlargeth the heart with thankfulness. 166
3 § And encourageth the heart the more to pray, for other things. 169
4 § If it makes more carefull to performe the vowes made to obtaine it. 170
5 § If by faith a man sees and acknowledgeth Gods sole hand in the accomplishment. 174
6 § By an assurance which comes sometimes with the mercy. 178
7 § By the event: Things obtained by prayer prove stable mercies. 179

CHAP. 9. Considerations, to quiet us, and to helpe to discern an acceptation of the prayer, when the thing is Not Accomplisht. 183

- 1 § The thing not alwayes granted, when yet the prayer is heard. *ibid.*

An

THE TABLE.

An objection answered. 185

2. ¶ Some blessings not absolutely promised; nor absolutely to be prayed for. 188

In which a deniall is to bee interpreted as best for us in Gods judgement. 190

3. ¶ There may be a reservation in the deniall, for some greater mercy. *ibid*

4. ¶ There may bee a transmutation into some other blessing of the same kind. 193

5. ¶ God when hee denies, yet answereth to the ground of our prayers. 196

6. ¶ And yeelds farre in it, to give satisfaction to his child. 203

7. ¶ Wee may know that the prayer notwithstanding is accepted, by the effects upon the heart, which are 4. 206

1. If we acknowledge God righteous in the deniall. *ibid.*

2. If God fills the heart with contentment in the deniall. 207

3. If the heart bee thankfull out of faith. 209

4. If not discouraged, but prayes still. 210

CHAP. 10. Application: *A reproofe of them that pray, but looke not after the Returnes of their prayers: The causes of this neglect: are* 212

1 Temp.

THE TABLE.

281 Temptations : 1. From want of assurance that our persons are accepted, 216

2. From the weaknes of our prayers : three answers to it, 221

3. From not obtaining what we formerly prayed for, answered by

4. things, 227

2. More sinfull discouragements as, 231

1. From slothfulnesse in praying, 231

2. Looking at prayer as a duty only, and not as a meanes to obtaine, 236

3. Falling into sinne after prayers, 240

Six Observations more out of the Text.

1. *Observ.* That God doth sometimes no speake peace to his owne people, 245

2. *Observ.* The cause thereof some folly, 251

3. *Observ.* God only can speake peace, 258

4. *Observ.* God easily can give peace, 261

5. *Observ.* God will certainly speake to his people, 270

6. *Observ.* After peace spoken his people should returne no more to folly, 281

The sin and folly of relapsing shewne by 7 reasons, 291

1. Temptations from relapse into the same sinne after peace spoken, answered

By Scriptures, 321

By 3 Examples, 331

By 4 Reasons, 340

5 Cautions, 360

FINIS. THE



THE
RETURNE
OF
PRAYERS.

[PSAL. 85.8.

*I will heare what God the
Lord will speake : for He
will speake peace unto His
people, and to his Saints :
but let them not turne a-
gaine to folly.*

The Coherence of the words.

His *Psalme* was
penned, in the
name and for the
comfort of the whole
B Church

Church of the *Iewes*, both as a Prophecie of, and a Prayer for their returne out of the *Babylonish* Captivity, and the flowing in again of that ancient glory, peace, administration of Justice, liberty of Gods Ordinances, plenty and increase, which formerly they enjoyed, but had now suffered an ebbe of seventy yeares continuance. And first he beginneth with Prayer, from the first *verse* to this wee have in hand, putting the Lord in minde of, and urging Him with His gracious dealings in former times unto His Church: this is not the first time (saith he) that the Church hath

hath beene in Captivity,
and that thou hast return-
ed it, (as out of *Ægypt*,
&c.) and therefore wee
hope that thou wilt doe so
againge; *Thou hast beene fa-
vourable unto thy Land, &c.*
His Prayer being finished
and hee having spoke, he
now stands, and listens, as
you use to doe when you
expect an *Eccho*, what
Eccho hee should have,
what answer would bee
returned from Heaven,
whither his Prayer had al-
ready come; *I will heare
what the Lord will speake:*
or as some read it, *I heare
what the Lord doth speake:*
for sometimes there is a
present *Eccho*, a speedy
answer returned to a

mans heart, even ere the Prayer is halfe finished, as unto *Daniel, Dan. 9. 20. 21.* And in briebe it is this, *The Lord will speake peace unto His people*: this answer hee findes written at the bottome of the petition, but with this clause of admonition for time to come, added, *But let them not returne againe to folly*: a good use to bee made of so gracious an answer.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

*The maine observation and
subject of this Discourse
thence deduced: That
Gods people are dili-
gently to observe the
answers to their Pray-
ers: The reasons of it.*

THese words being e-
specially spoken in re-
lation to the answer of
God returned to his Pray-
er made, therefore in that
relation I meane princi-
pally to handle them.

The observation is this;
*That when a man hath put
up Prayers to God, hee is to
rest assured, that God will
in mercy answer his Prayers,*

Chap. 1.

and to listen diligently, and observe how his Prayers are answered: both are here to bee observed. I will heare what God will speake, that is, how Hee will accomplish them: and with all he confidently expresseth an assurance, that God will speake peace. Thus doth the Church, Mich. 7. 7, 8. I will looke to the Lord, I will wait, my God will heare mee: Shee was both sure of gracious audience with Him, my God will heare me: and she will wait till hee answers her, and observe how hee doth it, I will looke to the Lord: and vers. 9. I will beare the indignation of the Lord, till he plead my cause. So Habakkuk,

Chap. I.

kuk, hee having made a Praier against the Tyrannie of *Nebuchadnezzar*, in the first Chapter, having ended it, hee begins the second Chapter thus, *I will stand upon my watch tower, and see what hee will answer mee:* and in the end an answer comes *vers. 2.* and as hee thus waited for a Vision (for sometime their Prophecies were in answer to their prayers) so should wee for an answer unto ours.

1. Reason, because otherwise you take an Ordinance of God in vain in your hearts, which is to take *Gods Name* (with whom in that Ordinance you deale) *in vaine*: for it

The sinfulness of the neglect hereof demonstrated by 7. reasons.

Reas. I.

Hereby an Ordinance of God is taken in vaine: which is Gods Name.

Chap. I.

is a signe you thinke your prayer not an effectuall meanes to attain that end it is ordained for; and say secretly in your hearts, as they *Iob 21.15. What profit have we, if we pray to him?* for if we use any meanes, and expect not the end, it is a signe wee thinke the meanes vaine to accomplish that end. Whereas every faithfull prayer is ordained of God to bee a meanes to obtaine what wee desire and pray for, and is not put up in vain, but shall have answer: 1. *Iob. 5.14, 15. This is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we aske any thing according to His will, He heareth us: tis true, God heareth*

reth an enemy, but to
heare with favour, is the
hearing there meant; and
is so used in our ordinary
speech, as we say of a Fa-
vourite, that he hath the
Kings eare; and if a man
bee *obstinate* to a mans
counsell, we say, *hee would*
not heare, though hee give
the hearing; so here, *to*
heare is a word of gracious
inclination to doe the
thing required; and thus
Gods eares are said to bee
open to their prayers; and so
it followes there, that *if*
he heareth us, whatsoever we
aske, wee know that we have
the petitions that wee desired
of Him. As soone as wee
have prayed, wee are said
to have our petitions, that is,

Chap. I.

they are then granted, and we may be confident they are assented unto by God; although in regard of outward dispensation, the command for accomplishment is not yet come forth: even as a petitioner is said to *have his suit*, when the *word of the King* is gone forth that it shall be done, though it passeth not the seale, or bee not signed a good while after. And like as when a wicked man sinneth, as soone as the act is committed, so soone *doth sentence* from God goe forth against the sinner, but the *Execution* overtakes him not (it may bee) a good while after, according to that of *Solo-*

mon,

mon, Sentence against an e-
 will doer is not presently exe-
 cuted, it is presently senten-
 ced, as the words imply,
 but not executed: so in
 like manner falleth it out,
 when a godly man praies,
 that as soone as the praier
 arrives in Heaven (which
 is in an instant) so soone
 is the petition granted,
 (So *Dan. 9. at the beginning*
of his praier the Command
came forth ver. 23. though
the Angel, who brought
the answer, arrived not at
him till towards the end
in the Evening, ver. 21.)
 but the reall accomplish-
 ment of it may be defer-
 red. So as no prayer in re-
 spect of an answer to it
 is in vaine; but where
 God.

Chap. 1.
 Eccles 7:11

Chap. 1. God hath given a heart to speake, Hee hath an eare to heare, and love to returne answer: which not to regard, is to take an Ordinance in vain, which is *Gods Name*.

Reas. 2.
Wee take
the *Attrib-*
utes of
God in
vaine.

And secondly, not simply *Gods name*, as in an Ordinance made knowne, but also His name, that is, His Attributes are taken in vaine. For it is a signe you thinke of that God you pray to, that either *his eare is heavy, that hee cannot beare: or his hand shortned, that he cannot save: or his heart straitned, and his bowels restrained, that he will not:* And thus you rob him, and despoile him of one of his most royall
Titles,

Chap. 1.

Psal. 65.2.

Titles, whereby he styles himselfe, a *God that heareth prayers*; who is fore-gardfull of them, that in the first of *Kings* 8. 59. they are said to be *nigh the Lord day and night*, they are all before him, and he sets them in his view, as wee doe letters of friends which wee sticke in our windows, that we may remember to answer them; or lay them not out of our bosomes, that wee might be sure not to forget the: so the petitions of his people, passe not out of his sight, till hee sends an answer, which is called *speaking here; God speaking as well in his workes as in his word*. But you, by your neglect

Chap. i.

neglect herein, make an Idoll God of him, such as were the *vanities of the heathen*, as if hee had eares and heard not, eyes and saw not your need, &c. Such a God as *Elias* mockt, *You must speak aloud*, (saith he) *he may be in a journey*, &c. Even such a God doe you make the God of heaven & earth to bee, whilest you put no more confidence in him, or make no more reckoning of your prayers to him, then the *heathens* did of their *sacrifices* to their Gods. Petitioners do not onely put up their requests, but use to wait at great mens doores, & enquire, and listen what answer is given unto them; and

Chap. 1.

and it is part of an honour
to great men that we doe
so: and for the same end
are wee also to waite on
God, As an acknowledge-
ment of his greatnesse, and
our distance from him, and
dependance upon him; as
the eyes of the servants looke
to the hand of their Masters,
so doe we (saith David) on
thee, till thou hast mercy on
us. And Psalm. 130. after
he had prayed ver. 2. Hee
saith, hee waited more then
they that watch for the mor-
ning, like those that ha-
ving some great businesse
to doe on the morrow,
long for the day light, and
looke often out to spy the
day, so hee for a glimme-
ring, and dawning of an
answer.

Psal. 123. 2

Chap. 1.

Reas. 3.

If God
give an an-
swer we
make him
speake in
vaine.

answer. The like we have
Psal. 5. 3. In the morning
will I direct my prayer to
thee, and looke, that is, for
an answer.

Againe, 3. If God doth
give you an answer, if you
minde it not, you let God
speake to you in vaine,
when you doe not listen
to what hee answers: if
two men walke together,
and the one, when him-
selfe hath said, and spoke
what hee would, listens
not, but is regardlesse of
what the other answers,
hee exceedingly slights
the man: *As non responde-
re pro convitiis est*, not to
answer againe is con-
tempt, *so non attendere*, not
to attend to what one
sayes:

sayes: Now our *speaking*
to God *by prayers*, and his
speaking to us *by answers*
thereunto, and to study
out his dealings with us,
by comparing our praier
and his answers together,
which are as *Dialogues* be-
tween us and him, is one
great part of our *walking*
with God. It is said of *Sam-*
uels prophecy, *that not a*
word of it fell to the ground:
and so it may bee said of
our prayers; and so it
ought to bee of Gods an-
swers, *not a word of them*
should fall to the ground: as
there doth, if you by your
observation, and listning
therunto catch them not
(as *Benhadads* servants are
said to doe *Ahabs* words,) appre-

1. Sam. 3.
19.

Chap. 1.

apprehend, and observe them not : & by the same reason, that you are to observe the fulfilling of *Gods* promises, you are of your prayers also : now, *1. Kings* 8. 56. it is said, *not one word failed of all bee promised,* *Solomon* had observed this by a particular survey, and register made of all that *God* had spoken and done for them, and found not a promise unperformed : and there is the like reason both of answers to prayers, (for prayers are but putting promises into suite;) and for our observing of them : and therefore *Salomon* brings those words in there, to this very purpose, to confirme

Chap. I.

firm their faith in this, that no prayers made, would faile, being grounded on a promise, thereby to encourage others, and his owne heart to diligence herein, as also as a motive unto God to hear him; for *vers. 59.* hee inferres upon it, *Let my words be nigh thee, &c.* Seeing thou alwaies thus performest thy good word unto thy people.

4. Yea, you will provoke the *Lord* not to answer at all, he will forbear to answer, because hee sees it will be thus in vain. When a man is talking to one that listens not to him, hee will cease to answer, and leave off speaking,

Reas. 4.

God may be provoked not to answer at all.

Chap. 1.
Heb. 10.
36.

ing, and so will God. So as that which the *Apostle* saith of faith, that it is not enough to beleeve, but when you have done the will of God, you have need of patience to eke out faith, that you may inherit the promises, may bee also said, and is alike true of praying: it is not enough to pray, but after you have prayed, you have need to listen for an answer, that you may receive your prayers; God will not fulfill them else. As he said, *the Sermon was not done*, when yet the Preacher had done, because it is not done, till practised: so our prayers are not done, when yet made, but you must

Chap. 1.

must further waite for,
and attend the accom-
plishment.

5. If you observe not
his answers, how shall you
blesse God, and returne
thanks to him for hear-
ing your prayers: *Psal.*
16.1,2. I love the Lord,
because hee hath heard my
voice, and my supplication,
and therefore he goes on
to thanke him, through-
out the whole Psalme.
You are to watch unto pray-
er with thanksgiving: and
therefore, as to watch, to
observe, and recollect
your owne wants, which
you are to pray for, that
you may have matter of
requests to put up, so also
to observe Gods answers
for

Reas. 5.

We shall
not return
thanks to
God for
hearing us.

Col. 4.2.

Chap. I.

for matter of thankesgi-
ving; and many fill that
common place head full
of matter, to furnish them
for petitioning, but as for
this other of thankesgi-
ving, they watch not un-
to it against they come to
pray, nor study matter for
that head also; and if any
study will furnish you this
way, it is the studying out
of Gods answers to your
prayers: The reason you
pray so much, and give
thankes so little, is, that
you minde not Gods an-
swers: you doe not study
them. When we have put
up a faithfull prayer, God
is made our debtor by
promise, and wee are to
take notice of his pay-
ment

ment, and give him an acknowledgement of the receipt of it, hee loseth of his glory else.

6. As God loseth, so your selves also the experience which you might get hereby. 1. Both experience of G O D and his faithfulness, which will cause in you, hope and confidence in God another time, when you have found him againe and againe answering your prayers. It was a speech of one eminent in holiness, upon occasion of the accomplishment of a great request made to God by him, That God having never denied him any request, *I have tryed God often,*

Chap. 1.

Reas. 6.

We lose much experience,

1.

Of Gods faithfulness to us.

Chap. I.

often, now (sayes he) henceforth I will trust him; if the hearing the prayers of another, will encourage us to goe to God, (as Psal. 33. 5. For this cause shall every one that is godly pray unto thee) much more when we observe, and have experience that our owne are heard: Therefore (sayes David) Psal. 116. 1, 2. The Lord hath heard me, and I will call upon him as long as I live: as if hee had said, Now that God hath heard mee, now I know what to doe: this experiment, if I had no more, is enough to encourage me for ever to pray unto God: I have learned by it to call upon him,

as

Chap. 1.

2.

Of our
owne
hearts and
wayes to-
wards him.

as long as I live. And also
by observing Gods an-
swers to your prayers,
you will gaine much in-
sight into your own harts,
and wayes, and prayers ;
and may thereby learne
how to judge of them. So
Psalm. 66. 18, 19. Davids an-
swere assurance that he did not re-
gard iniquity in his heart,
was strengthened by Gods
having heard his prayers :
For thus he reasons, *If I re-*
gard iniquity in my heart,
God will not heare me : But
God hath heard me. FOR 1.
If God doth not grant
your petitions, it will put
you to study a reason of
that his dealing : & so you
will come to search into
your prayers, and the car-
riage

Chap. 1.

riage of your hearts therein, to see whether you did not pray amisse; according to that, *We trust & have not, because ye aske amisse, James 4.3.* As if you send to a friend, who is punctuall in that point of friendship of returning answers, and useth not to faile, and you receive no answer from him, you will beginne to thinke there is something in it: And so also here, When a Petition is denied, you will be jealous of your selves, & inquisitive, What should be the matter, and so by that search come to see *that* in your prayers, which you will learne to mend the next time. Or 2. if they be answered,

swered, yet because that
therein usually God deales
in a proportion with you
to your prayers, (as you
might perceive if you
would observe his dea-
lings with you) you would
by this meanes come to
have much insight into
Gods acceptation, and o-
pinion of your wayes;
For you should see His
dealings with you, and
yours with Him, to be ex-
ceeding parallel and cor-
respondent, and hold pro-
portion each with other.
So Psalm 8. *When my distresse*
I called upon the Lord, and
so verse 7, 8, &c. hee goes
on to describe his delive-
rance which was the fruit
of those prayers, and then

W. J. 1608
H. B. W.
d. 1608
1608

Chap. 1.

at 20, 21. verses, & so hee addes his observation up. on both, *According to the cleannesse of my hands hath he dealt with mee, &c.* For with the pure thou shalt shew thy selfe pure.

Reas. 7.

We shall
lose much
comfort.

7. You will lose much of your comfort: there is no greater joy than to see prayers answered, or to see souls converted by us, *Iohn 16. 24. Aske and you shall receive, that your joy may be full:* the receiving answers makes joy to abound and overflow. Yea, even when we pray for others, if our prayers be answered for them, our joies are exceeding great; much more when in our owne behalfe: and therein, even
in

in the smallest things
which a Christian doth
enjoy, doth his comfort
exceed anothers, that hee
hath them by vertue of
prayers, and promises: he
knowes how hee came by
them; *If stolne waters bee
sweet, And bread eaten in
secret, &c. (as Solomon saies)*
so wicked men; beg'd meat
is much more sweet to god-
ly men: yea, in the very
praying for outward mer-
cies, there is more sweet-
nesse, than they have in
enjoying them. As it is
joy to a good heart to see
any one converted; but
much more to him that
is the meanes of it. *I have
no greater joy (saies S. Iohn)*
then that my children walke

Pro. 9. 17.

Chap. I.

in truth: So to see God
 doe good to his Church,
 and heare others prayers
 is a comfort, but much
 more to see him do it at a
 mans own prayers. There-
 fore when God restores
 comfort to a drooping
 soule, he is said, *Ezay 57. To*
restore comfort offe to his
mourners, that is, to those
 that prayed and mourned
 for him, as well: as unto
 that soule it selfe, it be-
 ing a comfort to them to
 see their prayers answer-
 ed: Comfort it is many
 wayes: To heare from
 God; as to heare from a
 friend, though it bee but
 two or three words, and
 charabout a small matter,
 if there be at the bottome
 this

I

this subscription, *Your loving Father*, or, *Your assured friend*, it satisfies abundantly: so also, ². To know that God is mindfull of us, accepts our works, fulfill his promises: ³. How doth it rejoyce one to find another of his mind in a controversy: but that *God* and *we* should be *of one mind*, and concurre in the desire of the same things; *not two in the earth* only agree, but *God* who is in heaven and *we* to agree, this rejoiceth the heart exceedingly. And thus it is when a man perceives his prayer answered. Therefore you lose much of your comfort in blessings, when you do not observe answers to your prayers. C 4 Chap.

2

3

Mat. 18. 19.

Chap. 2.**CHAP. 2.**

Three cases propounded: The first, concerning prayers for the Church, and for the accomplishment of such promises as may fall out in ages to come.

NOW as for rules, and helps to find out Gods meaning towards you in your prayers, and to spie out answers; and how to know when God doth any thing in answer to your prayers, this is the next thing to bee handled: wherein first, I will answer some cases, and queries which may fall out in severall sorts of prayers, about

about the answering of them: Chap. 2.

1 As first, concerning prayers put up for the Church, for the accomplishment of such things as fall out in Ages to come.

2 Concerning praier made for others of your friends, kinred, &c.

3 Concerning those praier, whether for your selves or others, wherein others joine with you.

For the first. First, there may bee some prayers, which you must bee content, never your selves to see answered in this world; the accomplishment of them not falling out in your time: such as

C 5

are

6. 1.

The full answer to such prayers is to come.

Chap. 2.

are those you haply make for the calling of the *Jews*, the utter downfal of Gods enemies, the flourishing of the Gospel, the full purity and liberty of Gods Ordinances, the particular flourishing and good of the society and place you live in: all you whose hearts are right, doe treasure up many such prayers as these, and *sowe* much of such precious *seed*, which you must bee content to have the Church (it may be) in after Ages to reape: All which prayers are not yet lost, but will have answers: for as God is an *eternall* God, and Christs righte-ousnesse an everlasting righte-ousnesse, and therefore of
eter-

eternall efficacy, *Dan. 9. 24*
Being offered up by the eter-
nall Spirit, *Heb. 9. 14*. So are
prayers also, which are the
worke of the eternall Spi-
rit of Christ, made to that
God in his Name, and in
him are eternally accep-
ted, and of eternall force,
and therefore may take
place in after Ages. So the
prayer that *S. Stephē* made
for his persecutors, tooke
place in *Saul* when *S. Ste-*
phen was dead. So *Dauids*
prayer against *Iudas*, *Psal.*
109. 8, 9. took effect above
a thousand yeeres after, as
appeares, *Acts 1. 20*. So
the prayers of the Church
for three hundred yeeres
in the Primitive times,
That *Kings* might come to
the

Chap. 2.

Revel. 12. 1

the knowledge of the truth, and they leade peaceable and quiet lives in all godlinesse and honesty, (which S. Paul in Nero's time exhorted unto, 1. Tim. 2. 2.) were not answered, & accomplished till Constantines time, whē the Church brought forth a Man-childe. So Esay 58. after hee had exhorted to, and given directions for fasting & prayer in a right manner, hee adjoyneth this promise: Thou shalt raise up the foundation of many generations; thou shalt be called the repairer of the breach, namely for this, because his fasting, and prayers might have influence into many ages yet to come, in the accom.

accomplishment of what was prayed for. And that which *Christ* saies of the Apostles, reaping the fruit of *S. Iohn* the Baptists ministry, and the seed he had sowne, is in like manner herein verified; *Iohn* 4.37. *One soweth and another reapeth.* And in this sense that which the Papists say is true, that there is a common treasury of the *Church*, not of their merits, but of their prayers: there are *bottles of teares* a filling, *Vials* a filling to be powred out for the destruction of *Gods* enemies: what a collection of prayers hath there been these many Ages towards it? and that may bee one reason

Chap. 2.

1. Pet. 1. 11

son why God will do such great things towards the end of the world, even because there hath beene so great a stock of prayers going, for so many ages, which is now to be returned: and herein it falls out to us in our prayers, as in their prophecies to the Prophets of old, The Spirit in them did signifie the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. Vnto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things that are now revealed: and thus is it in the spirit of prayer, which is instead of the spirit of prophecy: for wee pray through the guidance of the Spirit (who

Chap. 2.

who teacheth us what to
aske) for many things that
come to passe in after
ages.

Onely at present, it
may bee, in prayer thou
hast revealed unto thee by
a secret impression made
on thy spirit, that these
things shall come to passe,
and so hast thy faith con-
firmed in them, and with-
all an evidence, that even
for thy prayers, among o-
thers, God will performe
them; and that the contri-
bution of thy prayers,
doth help to make up the
summe: and upon such
prayers God usually for
the present also testifies
the acceptation of a mans
person, and reveales him-
selfe

§.2.

Yet they
may have
an answer
at present,
in assurāce
both that
they shall
come to
passe, and
of the ac-
ceptation
of our
persons for
them.

Chap. 2.

selfe most to him that hee is his ; as he did to *Moses* ; he never revealed his love to *Moses* more, then when he praied most for Gods people. And haply thou hast that as one of thy best evidences of the uprightnesse of thy heart, that thou canst pray for the Churches good, though for a long time to come, which thou maiest never behold with thine eyes, even as *David* also did, and rejoyced in it.

§.3.

And in heaven we shall rejoyce at the accomplishment of them : and at the day of Judgement

And when they are accomplished, and thou in heaven, thy joy will surely bee the more full for these thy praiers : as at the conversion of those thou hast prayed for, so at the

the ruine of the Churches
enemies, &c. whom thou
didst pray against; For if
there bee joy in heaven at
the conversion of a sinner,
(as at the birth of a new
Prince and Heire of hea-
ven) then haply in a pro-
portion hee shall rejoyce
most, whose prayers had
most hand in it, and a spe-
ciall interest therein. And
so as thy other *workes*, so
thy prayers *follow thee*, and
the fruit of them, as *Ieremy*
speakes: and how ever,
yet at the day of Judge-
ment thou shalt rejoyce, as
well as they that enioyed
the fruit of thy prayers in
their times, thou having
sowne the seed of their
happinesse; both hee that
sowes,

Ier. 17.10.

Chap. 3.

*sower, and hee that reapes
shall then rejoyce together, as
Christ sayes, Iohn 4.36.*



CHAP. III.

*The second Case, concerning
prayers made for others:
of our friends, &c. How
they are answered?*

THe second case is, con-
cerning answers to our
prayers for others, for
particular men, as friends,
and kindred, &c. and like-
wise for temporall bles-
sings.

Pray for
others wee
ought.

Pray for others you
know wee must: so the
Elders of the Church for
those

those that are sick, *1. Cor. 5.*
15, 16. Pray one for ano-
 ther, sayes S. James : as in
 case a man is troubled
 with a lust, tell some pri-
 vate friend of it, *Confesse*
your sin one to another; that
 when a mans owne pray-
 ers are not strong enough
 to cast it out, it may bee
 done by the help of ano-
 thers praier joyned with
 his. (So it followes, *That*
ye may bee healed, ver. 16.
 For in that sense I under-
 stand healing, in *ver. 16.*)
 So also, *1. John 5. 16.* If a
 man see his brother sin a sin,
 which is not unto death, that
 is not against the Holy
 Ghost, hee shall aske life for
 him, and God shall give him
 life, that sins not unto death.

Con-

Chap. 3.

§. I.

Such pray-
ers for o-
thers God
often gran-
teth,

Concerning this case I
give these considerations,
how such prayers are an-
swered.

I. Consideration. Such
prayers God often hea-
reth; why else are any
such promises made? as
*That they shall bee healed in
their bodies, James 5. 15.
Healed of their lusts, ver. 16.
Converted to life, 1. Ioh. 5.
16.* God hath made these
to encourage us to pray,
and to testifie his abun-
dant love to us; that it so
overflowes and runs over,
that he will heare us, not
onely for our selves, but
for others also: which is
a signe we are in extraor-
dinary favour. So God in-
timates concerning *Abra-
ham,*

ham, to Abimelech, Gen.
20.7. He is a Prophet, and he
shall pray for thee, and thou
shalt live : and as he was a
Prophet, so wee are Priests ;
as for our selves, so for o-
thers also, to God our Fa-
ther : and it is a preroga-
tive we have through the
fellowship wee have, and
communion of Christs
Priestly Office, who hath
made us Kings and Priests,
to prevaile and intercede
for others, and a speciall
token and pledge of ex-
traordinary love. For if
God heares a mans pray-
ers for others, much more
for himselfe in his owne
behalf. So when Christ
healed the man sick of the
palsie, it was, as it is said,

Revel. 1.6.

For

Chap. 3.

Hab. 2. 4.

§. 2.
Yet al-
waies they
do not pre-
vaile for
the parties
prayer for.

For the faith of the slanderers
by, Matth. 9. 2. Hee seeing
their faith, said, Thy sinnes
are forgiven thee; the mea-
ning is, not as if for their
faith sake he forgave that
man his sins, for, The just
doth live by his (owne)
faith: but to encourage
them, who out of faith
brought that sick man to
him; and us all in like ma-
ner to bring others, and
their plaints, by prayer,
before him; he therefore
then tooke occasion to
declare and pronounce
forgivencesse to that poore
man; hee therefore then
said, Thy sinnes are forgi-
ven thee.

2. Consideration: yet
secondly, prayers for o-
thers

Chap. 3

Others may often also not
obtaine the particular
thing prayed for them.
So Samuels prayer for
Saul, 1 Sam. 15. 35. So Da-
uid for his enemies, Psal. 137.
13.

For it is in this, as it is
in the use of other means
and ordinances for the
good of others; God ma-
king such like kinde of
promises to our prayers
therein, as hee hath made
to our endeavours to con-
vert when wee preach to
men: that looke as wee
preach to many, and yet
but few beleeve, for, *Who*
hath beleeved our report?
even as many as are ordai-
ned to eternall life; wee be-
come all to all, and winne but
some:

The rea-
son.

Rom. 10.
16.

Chap. 3^d

some: So we pray for many, not knowing who are ordained to eternall life, which whilest wee know not, wee are yet to pray for them, 1. *Tim.* 2, 3, 4. Onely as where God hath set his Ordinance of Preaching, it is more then a probable signe hee hath some to convert, and usually the word takes among some, though often but a few: So when hee hath stirred up our hearts to pray for others, it is a signe God will heare us for some of those we pray for: yet so as we may be denied. For God doth require it as a duty on our parts, because it is an outward meanes ordained by God,

Chap. 3.

God, by which ſometimes
Hee uſeth to bring things
to paſſe: but yet not as ſuch
a certaine, and infallible
meanes, as hee hath tied
himſelfe univerſally unto,
to bring the thing to paſſe
on his part.

And though indeed his
promiſe to heare and ac-
cept the prayer is generall
and univerſal: yet the pro-
miſe to heare it, by gran-
ting the very thing it ſelfe
prayed for, is but an inde-
finite promiſe; ſuch as he
makes to other meanes
of doing men good, as to
our admonitions and re-
proofes, and to our prea-
ching, &c. *Hee makes ſuch
promiſes, becauſe ſometimes
hee doth heare and convert*

Such pro-
miſes to
hear us for
others, be-
ing but in-
definite,
not uni-
verſall.

D

by

Chap. 3.

Heb. 9.27.

by them. For instance, that promise, *1 am. 5. 15. of healing the sick*, cannot be universal: for it might then be supposed as a truth implied in it, that sick men might never die, whē as it is appointed for all men once to die, seeing it may be supposed that the Elders may at all such times of danger of death stil come and pray with them: but the meaning is, that it is an Ordinance, which God hath made a gracious promise unto, because *he often* doth restore the sick at their praier: and therefore upon every such particular occasion, wee are to rely upon God for the performance of it, by
an

an act of recumbencie;
though with an act of full
assurance that we shall ob-
tain it, we cannot; the pro-
mise being not universall,
but indefinite.

Of the like nature are all
other promises of things
temporall and outward,
(of which wee herein
speak) as when God pro-
miseth to *give long life to*
them that honour their pa-
rents; riches and honours to
them that feare Him; the
tenour and purport of
which promises is not, as
if absolutely, infallibly, &
universally God doth al-
wayes performe these to
those that are yet truly
qualified with the condi-
tions specified in those

Illustrated
by the like
tenour of
all promi-
ses of
things tem-
porall.

Chap. 3.

Eccles. 7. 2.

promises; The contrary both Scripture, instances, and common experience shewes: they are therefore indefinitely meant, and so to bee understood by us; for, because when ever God doth dispense any such mercies to any of his, hee would doe it by promise; *All his wayes to His being truth*, that is, the fulfilling of some truth promised; and also God having purposed in his outward dispensation of things here in this world, to bestow riches and honours upon some that fear him, (though not upon all, for how then should *all things fall alike in all?*) Poverty and contempt up-
on

Chap. 3.

on them *that feare God,*
 even as well as those that
feare him not.) Hee hath
 therefore indefinitely ex-
 pressed His gracious dis-
 pensation herein, requi-
 ring answerably an act of
 faith (which principle in
 us is suited to a promise,
 as a faculty is to its proper
 object) suitable to that his
 meaning in the promise;
 That as hee intended not
 in such promises an abso-
 lute, infallible, universall
 obligation of himselfe to
 the performance of them
 to all that feare him: so
 the act of faith which a
 man is to put forth to-
 ward this promise, in the
 application of it for his
 owne particular, is not re-

The faith
 towards
 them re-
 quired to
 be but an
 indefinite
 act of re-
 cumbency
 not of as-
 surance.

Chap. 3.

quired to be an absolute, infallible perswasion, and assurance that God will bestow these outward things upon him, having these qualifications in him; but onely an *indefinite act* (as I may so call it) of *recumbency and submission*; casting and adventuring our selves upon him for the performance of it to us, not knowing but he may in his outward dispensations make it good to us, yet with submission to His good pleasure, if otherwise Hee disposeth it.

Though of assurance to the promise in generall, yet not in the application of it.

It is true indeed, that that act of *generall assent*, which faith is to give to this promise in the generall

all abstract truth of it, is to bee an assured certaine perswasion and beleefe, that God hath made this promise, and that He certainly will, and doth performe it unto some according to his purpose expressed therein; which act of generall assent, is that *believing without wavering*, namely of the truth of the promise in general, which *Scripture* calls for in prayer, *Iam. 1.6*. But yet that speciall act of application (as Divines call it) required in this faith, whereby I am to rest upon it, for my owne particular, is not required to be such an undoubted perswasion, as to thinke that I shall cer-

D 4

tainly

Chap. 3.

certainly have this particular promise in kinde fulfilled to me; for the truth, purpose, and intent of the promise, is not universall, but indefinite. So as it is but as it may be (as God elsewhere expresseth such promises, as Zeph. 1. 12.) That it shall be performed to mee: and yet because it may be God wil perform it unto mee, therefore my duty is to cast my self upon God, and put in for it, with submission to His good pleasure for the performance of it to me. So that so farre as the truth and intent of it, is revealed to be infallible & certain, so far a man is bound to have an answerable act
of

of faith, of certaine and infallible perswasion towards it, as to beleewe without wavering that God hath made such a promise, and will perform it according to His intent in making it, which is *unto some*: but yet withall because the tenour of it is but indefinite, and in that respect, whether it shal be performed to mee or no, is not therein certainly revealed; Therefore God requires not of mee in the application of such a promise, an absolute full perswasion that He will performe it to mee in such or such a manner, &c. But only an act of dependance and adherence with refer-

Chap. 3.

Yet when
God some-
times gives
a speciall
faith, then
we are to
bee assured
the thing
shall bee
done.

ring it to his wise and
righteous good pleasure
towards me.

And yet againe if God
should at any time give a
man such a speciall *faith*
concerning any such par-
ticular temporall blessing
for himselfe or another,
then hee is bound to be-
leeve it thus in particular:
as when Hee gave power
to any to work miracles,
(as to his Apostles Hee
did, with a Commission
to work them,) then they
were bound to beleieve
that such and such a mira-
cle should infallibly bee
wrought by them; as that
the Devils should be cast
out by them, &c. And
therefore in this case
Christ

Christ rebukes His Disci-
ples, for not beleeving
thus upon such particular
occasions, *Matth. 17. 20.*

And then it is also true,
that if God give such a
faith, Hee will infallibly
perform it: and thus those
his words are to bee un-
derstood, *Matth. 27. 22.*

Whatsoever yee aske in faith
beleeving, yee shall receive,
hee speakes it of the faith
of miracles; for 21. ver. he
had said, *If ye beleeve and*
doubt not, yee shall say to this
Mountaine, remoove into the
sea, and it shall be remooved:
so that, when God works
such a faith, and wee are
called to it, we are bound
to beleeve with a certain
perswasion that such a
thing

An obje-
ction pre-
vented.

Chap. 3.

thing will be done, and it shall bee done: but unto such a kinde of speciall faith in temporall promises for our selves or others, God doth not now alwayes call us. If indeed at any time wee did beleeve and doubted not, by reason of a speciall faith wrought by God, that God would remove a mountaine into the Sea, or bestow any outward mercy, it should be done: for he that stirred up such a faith, would accomplish the thing: but it is not that, which God requires of beleevers, that they should without doubting thus beleeve concerning outward things; the promises

Chap. 3.

promises thereof being not
universall, but indefinite;
and therefore answerably
a man is not absolutely
bound to beleve that
God wil certainly bestow
such a temporall blessing
on him, no not though he
should have the qualifica-
tion, which the promise
is made unto, the promise
being not universal, made
to all so qualified, but in-
definite to some of such so
qualified. The case is the
same of beleieving promi-
ses made to our praying
for others, which is the
thing in hand.

3. When the prayers
are thus made out of con-
science of our duty for
such, whom yet God doth
not

§.3.

Such pray-
ers for o-
thers are
often re-
turned in-
to our own
bosome.

Chap. 3.

not intend that mercy unto, then they are returned againe into our owne bowes to our advantage: even as *S. Paul* saith, *that his rejoycing that others preached, though they lost their labour, should turne to his salvation, Phil. 1.20.*

So prayers for others, though to the parties themselves we prayed for they prove in vaine, yet they turne to our good. So *Psalme. 35. 12, 13.* *When his enemies were sick, David he praied and humbled himselfe; and my prayers (saith he) returned into my bowes.* David did by this his prayer in secret for his enemies, testifie the sincerity of his heart to God

and

and his true forgivenesse
of them (for it is the usuall
disposition of Gods chil-
dren, to pray for them
that are the greatest ene-
mies to them,) and this
prayer though it did not
profit them, yet it turned
to *Dauids* owne good, it
came back, and home a-
gaine to him, with blef-
sings to himselfe; God de-
lighting in, and rewarding
such a disposition in his
childe, as much as any o-
ther; because therein we
resemble *Christ* so truly,
and shew that God is our
Father, and our selves to
have his bowels in us; and
God stirreth up this pray-
ing disposition in his chil-
dren for their enemies,
not

The Rea-
son.

Chap. 3.

not alwaies that he means to heare them for them, but because he meanes to draw forth, and so have an occasion to reward those holy dispositions, which are the noblest parts of his image in them and wherewith hee is so much delighted; and so their prayers returne into their owne bosome, and it is taken, as if they had prayed for themselves all that while. Thus in like maner, when *Moses* prayed so earnestly for the people of *Israel*, God offered to returne his prayer into his owne bosome, and doe as much for him alone, as hee had desired that God would doe for them.

them. I will make of thee a great Nation (saies God to him) for whom I will doe as much for thy sake, as thou hast prayed I should doe for these. As in preaching the Gospel, Christ told the Disciples, That if in any house they came to preach peace, there were not a Sonne of peace, Luke 10. on whom the message might take place, and their peace rest. Your peace (saies hee) shall returne unto you againe. So is it, if your prayers take not place.

4. If wee have prayed long for those, whom God intends not mercy unto, hee will in the end cast them out of our prayers and

¶ 4. God often in the end casts such out of our prayers hee intends not to heare us for.

Chap. 3.

158. 10. 11.

The Reason.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

158. 10. 11.

and hearts, and take our hearts off from praying for them. That which he did by a revelation from heaven to some Prophets of old, as to *Samuel* and *Jeremiah*; the same he doth by a more undiscerned worke; that is, by withdrawing assistance to pray for such; by withdrawing the spirit of supplication from a man, for some men, and in some businesses. Now thus he did with *Samuel*; *Why dost thou mourne for Saul?* 1. Sam. 16. 1. So with *Jeremiah*, Jer. 7. 16. *Pray not for this people;* and this he doth, because he is loath when his people doe pray but to heare them; and would

would not that such precious breath as that of prayer is, should bee without its full and direct successe, or be in vaine: therefore when he meanes not to heare, he layes the key of prayer out of the way, so desirous is hee to give answers to every prayer. It falls out in this case of praying for another, as in reprovng another. One whom God intends not good unto, God will lock up a mans heart towards such a man, that hee shall not bee able to reprove him, when towards another God doth inlarge it as much, where hee intends good; thus it is sometimes in praying for another;

Chap. 3.

Ezek. 3. 26

§. 5.

God sometimes answers those prayers in some others who we prayed not for. The reason.

another; so as in praying a man shall not be able to pray for, as not to reprove such a man, though his heart was to doe both: but it fareth with him as God threatneth concerning *Ezekiel* towards that people, that he makes his tongue cleave to the roafe of his mouth.

5. God will heare those prayers for, and answer them in some others, in whom wee shall have as much comfort, as in those wee prayed for: and so it often proves and falls out. God, to shew he lookes not as man lookes, nor chooseth as hee chooseth, lets our hearts be set on work to pray for the conversion

on or good of one hee intends not mercy to; and then answers them in some other, whom Hee makes as deare unto us. When God had cast off *Saul*, still *Samuels* heart lingred after him, and hee mourned for him: but God at the same time, when hee bids him cease mourning for *Saul*, 1. Sam. 16. to shew that yet hee accepted that his mourning as it came from him; *Gae* (saies hee) and anoint one of the *younes of Iesse*, 1. Sam. 16. 1. *Samuel* desired to see a good succesor in that government, and he having been their ruler, it was his speciall care; and he having anointed

Chap. 3.

ointed Saul, it exceedingly grieved him, that he should prove so wicked; and God saw and answered the ground of his desires; and therefore immediately upon his prayers, sent him to anoint the best King that ever was upon that Throne, who was the issue and Man-childe of those his prayers. And again, when Samuel came to anoint one of the sonnes of Jesse; when he saw Eliab, ver. 6. Surely (saies he) the Lords anointed is before me: If Samuel had been to choose, hee would have chosen him; and would have prayed for and desired him: but God seeth not as man

man seeth, ver. 7. and choo-
seth not as man chooseth:
but in David was his prai-
er fully heard, and answe-
red, and that better. So
Abraham he had prayed
for Ishmael; and Oh let Ish-
mael live in thy sight! Gen.
17. but G O D gave him
Isaac in stead of him. So
perhaps thou prayest for
one childe more then for
another, out of thy natu-
ral affection, looking on his
countenance and stature; as
Samuel did on Eliab; but
yet thy prayers being
sincere in the ground of
them, in that thou desi-
rest a childe of Promise,
God therefore answers
thee, though in another,
for whom yet haply, thy
which heart

Chap. 3.

heart was not so much stirred; who yet when he is converted, proves to thee as great a comfort; and it is as much as if that other thou diddest most pray for, had bin wrought upon.

**CHAP. IV.**

The third Case, about such prayers wherein others joine with us. How therein to discern the influence of our own prayers.

THe third Case to be considered is, when a man prays for something with others; or which

Chap. 4.

which others likewise pray for with him, so as he is not alone in it; how then should he know, that his prayers have a hand in obtaining it, as well as theirs? For in such cases *Satan* is apt to object; though the thing is granted indeed; yet not for thy prayers, but for the prayers of those others joyned in it with thee.

1. If thy heart did sympathize, and accord in the same holy affections with those others in praying, then it is certaine thy voice hath helpt to carry it; *If two agree on earth* (sayes Christ) *Matt. 18. 19.* the word is *συμφωνήσωσιν*, that is, if they harmonially agree

§. I.

If our hearts were affected in praying with the same holy affections wherewith others that prayed with us were.

Chap. 4.

gree to play the same tune: for prayers are musick in Gods eares, and so called *Melody to God*, *Ephes. 5.19* It is not simply their agreeing in the thing prayed for, but in the affections: for it is the affections that make the consort and the melody: now if the same holy affections were toucht, and struck by *Gods* spirit in thy heart, that in theirs, then thou doest help to make up the consort; and without thee it would have beene imperfect: yea, without thee the thing might not have been done; for *God* stands sometimes upon such a number of voices, and one voice casts it; as when he named

named ten righteous persons to save *Sodome*: when therefore the same holy motives and affections acted thee in thy prayer, which did them in theirs, it was the worke of the same spirit, both in them and thee, and God hath heard thee.

Especially if God did stir up the same secret instinct in thee, to sympathize with another in praying for such a thing unbeknowne one to another, as sometimes it falls out; then surely thy prayers are in it as well as his. You shall observe sometimes a generall instinct of the Spirit, put into Gods peoples hearts, ge-

Especially when this sympathy is unbeknowne each to other.

Chap. 4.

nerally to pray for or against a thing, without each others stirring up one another: even as *Ezekiel* by the river *Chebar* prophesied the same things *Jeremiah* did at home at *Jerusalem*. Thus against the time that *Christ* the *Messiah* came in the flesh, there was a great expectation raised up in the hearts of the godly people, to look and pray for him, *Luke* 2. 27. and 38.

§. 2.

By some speciall evidence: as first, sometimes by some notable circumstance.

2 God doth usually, & often evidence to a man, that his prayers contributed, and went among the rest towards the obtaining of it; as,

1 By some circumstance:

as

as for example, sometimes by ordering it so, that that man that prayed most for a thing of concernement, should have the first newes of it when it comes to bee accomplished : which *God* doth, as knowing it will bee most welcome newes to him. *God* doth herein, as wee doe with a friend, who we know is cordiall in, and wisheth well to a businesse ; hee sends him the first word of it, who was most hearty in it, & prayed most about it. Good old *Simeon*, had surely been earnest in seeking the *Lord*, as wel as the rest in *Ierusalem*, to send the *Messiah* into the world,

Chap. 4.

to restore and raise up the ruines of *Israel*, for *God* did reveale to him, that hee should see him before he died: and therefore to evidence to him his respect to his prayers, *God* carryed the good old man into the Temple, just at the time when the Child was brought into the Temple, for to bee presented to the Lord, *Luk.* 2.27,28. And in like manner good *Anna*, who had served *God* with fasting and praier, night and day: *God* ordereth it so, that she must also come in at the same instant, *Luke* 2.38. By some such like peculiar circumstance or other, doth *God* often use to witnesse to a mans heart,

heart, that hee hath heard him in businesse, prayed for in common with others.

2. By filling the heart with much joy in the accomplishment of what a man prayed for : which is an evident argument that his prayers did move the Lord to effect it, as well as the prayers of others. Thus that good old *Simon*, seeing his prayers now answered, hee was even willing to die through joy; and thought he could not die in a better time, *Lord now let thy servant depart in peace*. For when the desires have vented and laid out much of themselves, then when the

Secondly,
by the
hearts be-
ing filled
with much
joy in the
accom-
plishment.

Chap. 4.

return comes home, they have an answerable part and share in the comfort of it: and as desires abound in praying, so will joy and comfort also in the accomplishment. As when a Ship comes home, not onely the chiefe owners, but every one that ventured shall have a share out of the returne, in a proportion to the adventure: so here, though some one whom it mainly concerns hath especiall interest in the mercy obtained, yet thou shalt have thy prayers out in joy from God, that the thing is granted. *S. Paul* had planted a Church at *Thessalonica*, but hee could not stay to water

Chap. 4.

water it with his owne preaching, yet when absent, hee waters those Plants which hee had set, with prayers, night and day; 1. *Thes.* 3. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly for you*, sayes hee: and as his prayers were exceeding abundant for them, so was his joy as abundant in them, when hee had heard that they stood stedfast, and fell not back againe; Now wee live, if yee stand fast in the Lord, ver. 8. *And what thanks can we render to God for all the joy wherewith wee joy for your sakes, before the Lord? ver. 9.*

3. If God give you a heart thankfull for a bles-

E 5

sing

3 By
thankful-
nesse for it
when ac-
complishd.

Chap. 4.

sing vouchsafed to another, prayed for by you with others, it is another signe your prayers have some hand in it: *S. Paul* knew not *what thanks to give* for the answering of his prayers, as in that fore-mentioned place. Old *Eli* had put up but one short ejaculatory petition that wee reade of, for *Hannah*, & that was *The Lord grant thy petition*, *1 Sam. 1. 17.* & for the returne of that one prayer when *Hannah* related how *God* had answered her, *ver. 26, 27.* hee returned solemne thanks, *And he worshipped the Lord there. ver. 28.*

§ 3.
Especially
when the
thing ob-
tained co-
cernes a
mans own
particular.

And lastly, in case the
thing concerned thy self,
which

which was prayed for by others helping thee therein, what cause hast thou but to thinke that it was granted for thy owne prayers, and not for theirs onely? seeing God stirred up their hearts to pray for thee, and gave thee a heart to pray for thy selfe, and besides, gave thee the thing which thou desiredst : which argues thou art beloved as well as they, and accepted as well as they. *I know this shal turn to my salvation through your prayers, saith S. Paul, Phil. I. 19.* though their prayers went to the businesse, yet had not S. Paul beene accepted himselfe, the prayers of all the men
in

Chap. 4.

in the world, would have done him but little good. God may heare the prayers of the godly, for wicked men, when they doe not pray themselves, in temporall things; so hee did heare *Moses* for *Pharaoh*, *Abraham* for *Abimelech*; and he may heare godly men the sooner for others prayers; so hee heard *Aaron* and *Miriam* the sooner, for *Moses* his sake, *Numb.* 12. 13: But if God stirs up thy heart to pray for thy selfe, as well as others for thee; then God that gave thee a heart to pray, hath heard thy prayers also, and hath had a respect to them more in it then to theirs, because

because it concerned thy
selfe, as a more speciall
mercy unto thee.

Chap. 5.



CHAP. V.

*Common directions help-
full in all cases and pray-
ers. First, from such ob-
servations as may be ta-
ken, from before, and in
praying.*

HAVING premised these
Cases, I come now to
more generall and common
directions to help you in
discerning and observing
the minde of God, and his
answers to you in your
prayers. All which dire-
ctions

Chap. 5.

ctions are such, as may be helpfull in all the fore-mentioned cases, and in all sorts of prayers whatever. And they are taken from *observations*, to be made upon your prayers, &c. Both *before, in, and after* praying.

§ 1.

Before:
when God
prepares
the heart
to pray.

First, *Before* praying; when God bespeakes a prayer, (as I may so speak) that is, when God secretly speakes to the heart to pray much about a thing; I expresse it thus according to that phrase of David, Psal. 27. 8. *Thou saidst seeke my face :* and I said, *Thy face Lord will I seeke :* now God then speakes to the heart to pray, when not onely hee puts upon
the

the duty by saying to the
conscience, this thou
oughtest to doe: but
Gods speaking to pray is
such, as his speech at first
was, when hee made the
world, when hee said, *Let
there be light, and there was
light*: so hee sayes, Let
there be a prayer, and
there is a prayer, that is,
hee powres upon a man a
*spirit of grace and supplica-
tion*, a praying disposition;
hee puts in motives, sug-
gests arguments and pleas
to God; all which you
shall finde come in readi-
ly, and of themselves; and
that likewise with a quick-
ning heat, and inlarge-
ment of affections, and
with a lingring, and long-
ing,

Chap. 5.

ing, and restlesse-ness of spirit to bee alone, to powre out the soule to God, and to vent and forme those motions and suggestions into a prayer, till you have laid them together, and made a prayer of them. And this is a *speaking* to the heart: and observe such times when God doth thus, and neglect them not; then to strike, whilest the iron is hot; thou hast then his care, it is a speciall opportunity for that businesse, such an one as thou mayest never have the like. Suitors at Court observe *mollissima fandi tempora*, their times of begging, when they have Kings

Kings in a good mood, which they will be sure to take the advantage of; but especially if they should finde that the King himselfe should beginne of himselfe to speake of the businesse which they would have of him: and thus that phrase of *Psal.* 10. 17. is understood by some, that *God prepares the heart, and causeth the eare to heare*; that is, hee fashions it, and composeth it into a praying frame. And sure it is a great signe that God meanes to heare us, when himselfe shall thus indite the Petition.

And by the way let me give this note of difference, betweene these
speakings

The difference betweene Satans unreasonable urging us to pray, and Gods moving us,

Chap. 5.

*speaking*s to the heart, and those whereby Satan puts us upon such duties at unreasonable houres and times; as when we are otherwise necessarily to be imployed in our callings, to eate, or to sleepe, &c. then to put upon praying, is a device of his he useth, to tire out new converts with. The difference will appeare in this, the devill comes in a violent imperious manner upon the conscience, but enlargeth not the heart a whit unto the duty: but whensoever God at such extraordinary by-times doth call upon us, hee fits and prepares the heart, and fills the soule with holy suggestions,

gestions, as materials for the duty ; for whatsoever he calls to, he gives abilities withall to the thing he calls for.

And thus usually, when hee will have any great matters done & effected, hee sets mens hearts a worke to pray, by a kinde of gracious pre-instinct ; hee stirres them up and toucheth the strings of their hearts, by his Spirit sent downe upon them : Thus against the returne of the captivity he stirred up *Daniels* heart, *Dan. 9. 1.* Hee knowing by bookes, the time to be neere expiring was stirred up to seek God: and so hee that made this Psalme, *Salvation being then*

Dan. 9. 2.

Chap. 5.

then nigh, ver. 9. 10. then God stirred him up to pray, and penthis prayer for their returne: which God had foretold hee would doe, Ier. 29. 10, 11, 12. For having promised ver. 10. I will cause you to returne after seventy yeares: Then (sayes he, ver. 12.) shall ye call upon me, and ye shall goe and pray unto mee, and I will hearken unto you: he speakes it not onely by way of command, what it was they ought to doe; but as prophecyng also what they should doe; for then he meant to stirre up their hearts; as then hee did, as appeares by those forementioned instances. Therefore observe what things,

Chap. 5.

things, God, thus by an instinct doth inlarge thy heart to pray for at times, and sometimes at extraordinary by-times, when haply thou diddest not think to pray about any such thing, yet hee then stirred thee up most, it maybe, as thou wert walking, &c. and having spare time, he drawes thee into his presence and moves thee in that manner specified.

Now secondly: as God thus speaks to the heart to pray, so also *in praying*; and his *speaking* to the heart *in prayer* may bee discerned by these particulars.

1. When God quiets,
and

§. 2.

2 In prayer:
Gods speaking to the heart in prayer, an evidence of hearing: which may be discerned.

1 By giving a quiet rest of spirit about the thing prayed for, in and by prayer.

Chap. 9.

and calmes, and contents the heart in *prayer*, which is done by speaking something to the heart, though what is spoken, be not alwayes discerned: If you should see one, who was an earnest and importunate suitor and exceeding anxious when he went in to a great man, but behold him after comming out from him contented, and quieted, and cheerefull in his spirit, you would conceive that certainly something had beene said to him, which gave him encouragement, satisfaction and contentment in his suit; Thus when thou goest to God, and hast been importunate in a businessse,

finesse, (as suppose for Christ, *Oh give me Christ, or else I die!*) and thy desires were exceedingly up for it; But thou risest up with thy minde calmed and satisfied, and feelest the anxiousnesse, the solicitude of thy heart about the thing taken off, and dispelled; This is a good sign that God hath heard thy *Prayer*, and hath spoken something to thy heart, which makes it thus composed. When *Hannah* out of much bitterness and with strong desires (which by a long delay had bin made more violent, so as her heart was much disquieted (for, *Prov. 13. 12. Hope, and by the*

Chap. 5.

the same reason, desire also deferred makes the soule sick) when out of the abundance of her griefe, *shee had poured her soule out before the Lord, 1. Sam. 1. 16.* Eli the Priest joyning in prayer also for her, *The Lord grant thy petition!* after that prayer she found her heart so quieted, *that shee looked no more sad,* as the Text sayes there; She arose quieted, and calmed, and it was that prayer, that did both fill *Elies* mouth, with that word of prophecie, and her heart with quietnesse, and a secret word from God accompanying it, that did still those waves: and accordingly God gave her a Son,

Song, a Song of her desires.
 And the like God doth
 now, by speaking (as I
 said) something into the
 hearts as by dropping in
 some promise or other in-
 to the heart, or some like
 consideration; saying as
 it were some heart, even
 as Eli from God did to
 her, *The Lord grants thy
 petition;* As to S. Paul, when
 he was earnest with God
 about removing his suf-
 ferings by saying which
 whether they were the
 stirring up a lust, or tem-
 ptations of *blasphemy*, I
 doe not now dispute; I
 besought God thrice, that
 is, earnestly (sayes hee,)
 that it might depart; and to
 this hee had an answer in

F

the

Chap. 5.

the meane time given him, till it should bee taken away; enough to still and quiet him, for 2. Cor. 12. 8, 9. And he said, that is, in prayer the Lord did put in this consideration and promise into his thoughts. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee, and my power is made perfect in weaknesse. This answer thus comming in, this promise thus seasonably suggested stayed and quieted Paul's heart. In like manner thou hast (it may bee) been long praying against poverty, or the like distresse, and God lets fall this or the like promise into thy heart, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee,

Heb. 13. 5.

Chap. 5.

thee, which quiets and contents thy minde. This is an answer, and observe such answers, for they are precious.

2. If whilest thou art *a praying*, God doth draw nigh to thy soule, and revealeth himselfe to it, in and upon such, or such a particular petition. As in case thou didst mainly intend when thou diddest begin to pray, to set thy selfe to beg some temporall mercie at his hands, some great matter for the good and prosperity of the Church (as *Daniel*, Chap. 9. did set himselfe to seeke God for the returne of the Captivity:) and even before thou comdest

§. 3.

2 When God drawes nigh and reveales His love in and upon such a petition.

Chap. 5.

to aske it, or in asking it, God smiles upon thee, welcomes thee: falleth about thy neck and kisseth thee: This thou art to observe as a signe hee heares thy *prayer*, and accepteth both thee and it; when there is such a strong sense of Gods favour, and presence, whilest thou art upon such a suit and request, more then at other times, or then in other passages of the same *prayer*, this is a token God heares thee, in that particular, and thou art to observe this his speaking to thy heart: When thus thou shalt no sooner come into his presence to enquire of him, but hee

hee sayes, *Here I am*, as the promise is, *Esay 58.9.* Therefore, *Psal. 69. 17, 18.* *Hear me speedily* sayes *David*; and (that I may know thou hearest mee) draw nigh to mee: therefore when God drawes nigh to thee, it is a signe hee heares thee. *Daniel* having fasted and prayed for three weekes together, *Dan. 10. 2, 3*: Then an *Angell* came, and one of the three *Persons* came and told him, hee was a man greatly beloved, *ver. 11* and *19.* when in like manner God by his Spirit comes downe, and meets thee, and tells thy heart in secret that thou art *Hab* beloved, and *Hee is thine*,

Chap. 5.

then thy *prayers* are certainly heard: for if hee accepts thy person, much more thy *prayers*, *1. John 5. 19, 20.* Men, false men, (*false upon the ballance, as David speakes, when they come to bee tried and weighed,*) they will out of cunning use suitors most kindly then, when they meane to put them off, and deny them their requests: But God who is truth and faithfulnessse it selfe, doth not use so to deale, but when he means to answer the *prayer*, Hee withall sometimes reveals his free grace most, to the end they may see and acknowledge the fountaine of all, to be his everlasting

Chap. 5.

lasting love, and so take
the thing granted as a
fruit of it, and thereby
come to bee the more a-
bundantly thankfull.

Onely let me adde this
Caution, which may bee
of great use to you. That
it is not alwayes infalli-
bly true, that when God
drawes nigh to you in a
particular request, that
that request in particular,
shall bee granted in that
maner you desired, but it
is a certaine evidence that
thy prayer is heard, and
that the thing thou askest
is agreeable to his will,
and that hee approves of
thee and thy request ex-
ceedingly, and thinketh
the better of thee for it,

A caution:
That yet
this is not
alwayes an
infallible
signe the
thing is
granted,
though
that the
prayer is
accepted.

Chap. 5. and hee will give of his
 or something that is bet-
 ter. There may be herein
 and sometimes in a mis-
 take of Gods meaning, so
 thinketh that alwayes when
 the thing shall be granted,
 which God drawes nigh
 to a man as experience
 sometimes shewes the con-
 trary.

Quest. But you will say, Why
 doth God draw so nigh
 if he meanes not to grant
 it?

Ans. He shewes thereby
 His approving will of the
 thing prayed for. Now
 God approves many
 things, hee decrees not.
 There is his approving will
 and his decreeing will.
 God may shew his appro-

ving wil of the thing thou askest, (as suppose it bee in view a matter which is of great consequence for the Church;) which hee doth for thy encouragement: but yet it followes not, that his decreeing wil is for the accomplishment of that very thing in particular.

2. God may accept the person and the *prayer*, when hee doth not grant the thing prayed for; and by that drawing nigh witnesse his acceptation of thy person and the *prayer*. Yea,

3. That revealing of himselfe is oftentimes all the answer he intended to such a *prayer*, and it is an-

Chap. 5.

swer enough too, to enjoy in the stead of a particular mercy the assurance of Gods love. As suppose thou didst pray against some evill comming upon his Church, which he yet intends to bring; which hee did set thy heart a worke to pray against, thereby to manifest the sincerity therof; and then hee seeing thee thus sincere drawes nigh to thee, and tells thee, however, it shall go well with thee, and that thou art greatly beloved of Him: Thou art sometime to take this for all the answer hee meanes to give. And this hee doth sometimes also to content the heart, and
prepare

Chap. 5.

prepare it for a deniall in the thing: whereas, otherwise, the deniall of what a Christian hath been earnest in, might occasion (as in many it doth) a questioning and doubting of Gods love.

3 When God stirres up in the heart a particular faith in a businesse: as sometimes He doth, and upholds the heart to wait for it, maugre all discouragements. So hee did in David, *Psal. 27. 3.* David was then in great hazards by reason of Saul or Absalom, and those such and so often, as that to sense and outward probabilities hee was like never to live quietly againe at Ierusalem.

§.4.

God some times stirs up a particular faith of assurance in some businesses.

Chap. 5.

salem, and enjoy Gods Or-
 dinances there in peace;
 but for this *David* had
 prayed, and had made it as
 the grand request of his
 whole life (as every man
 hath some one great re-
 quest of all other, even as
 Hee hath some speciall
 grace above all other, or
 gift, &c. so request to God
 next to His salvation, as
 haply for his Ministry, or
 the like, therefore sayes
David, verse 4. *This one*
thing have I desired) and ac-
 cordingly God gave him
 a speciall faith in this
 thing above all other, be-
 cause it was his great re-
 quest, *In this will I be con-*
fidant, verse 3. And though
 an-haste of men should a-
 gaine

Chap. 5.

gaine and againe incompasseme, saies he, yet in this I will be confident, that I shall still escape, and see Ierusalem againe, and enjoy the Ordinances and live in peace; and though his faith failed him often (as in the persecution of Saul it did) for he said he should one day perish by the hand of Saul: yet at other times his faith was marvelously upheld, and hee was confident in this. Hee used not to be so, in other requests thus absolutely particularly and distinctly, and therefore he sayes, In this, &c. As there is a witnesse of the Holy Ghost immediate to the heart, sealing up adoption to a mans

1 Sam. 27.1

Chap. 5.

mans person, so in some cases, there is the like testimony for the obtaining of some eminent thing we have asked. Which particular speciall faith, doth in a kind of similitude answer to the faith of miracles of old, whereby a man had a particular confidence, that God would doe such a miracle by him: so in & by meanes of prayer, in some things there may be a particular strengthening & assuring the heart, that God will doe such a thing for a man: which I confesse is rare and extraordinary, as also that immediate testimony concerning our persons is, which many want that goe to heaven.

And

And haply this other concerning the accomplishment of speciall mercies, is much more rare; and but in some businesses; and is a thing which some men are not acquainted with, but yet may bee in some cases existent to some mens spirits, as it was to *Dauids* in the thing mentioned.

And concerning this also I will also adde a Caution, as about the former. That it doth not alwayes fall out upon all such kind of evidences made to a mans spirit, and that by God, that the thing prayed for doth come to passe. For these very perswasions stirred up by God, may

A caution, that herein a conditionall evidence be not taken for absolute.

Chap. 5.

may bee and are often but *conditionall*, though thus immediately made to a mans spirit, and are so to bee understood, and not peremptory and absolute. It cannot bee imagined that all these should alwayes be of greater absolutenesse and peremptorinesse; than were many of those revelations made by God to the Prophets, wherein Hee manifested his gracious purpose towards such a man or people, either to vouchsafe them such a mercie, or bring such a judgement; which forewarnings though they were particular and expresse, yet limited and intended with

with a condition, according to the performance, or not performance of which, it fell out, either the judgement expressly threatned was diverted, or that good thing which was as directly and fully promised, was not bestowed: as it was in the case of ~~them~~ threatening the destruction of Nineveh; and so in the promise concerning El's house, 1. Sam. 2. 30. I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father should walke before mee for ever, but now the Lord sayes, it shall not bee so. For they had broken the condition which was implied in it; they had despised the Lord;

Chap. 5.

Lord; and them that despise me, sayes God there, I will despise. In like manner is Gods meaning, expressed towards us in such like perswasions wrought in us by prayer, to be understood; as that such mercies will surely come to passe, but still under a condition of obedience, and performing of those vowes, which a man joyned with those his petitions, to move the Lord to grant the things; which if a man faile in, or ceaseth to goe on to beleevc, it may and doth often come to passe, that things fall out contrary to that perswasion, and then wee are apt to question whether

it

it was from God or no; which it might bee, and truly wrought by his Spirit, and yet not alwaies absolutely meant (that was your mistake so to take it) but conditionally onely. For in such great requests of the soule unto God, there use to passe mutuall covenants betweene God and us; and Indentures are drawne and sealed unto by us, that is, we in prayer, offer and promise to doe thus and thus, if God will vouchsafe us such a mercy, and pleade it to God to move him to bestow it; and God, hee thereupon (it may bee) seales a covenant on his part to grant the thing, & works

Chap. 5.

works such an undoubted
perswasion; but if wee in
that *interim* of waiting
for that mercy, doe deale
falsely in that covenant
which we made; and this
even whilest wee are yet
in dependance upon God
for it; whereby it appears
that we would have done
so much more after wee
should have received it
once, in this case God de-
nies the thing, and yet
notwithstanding, that per-
swasion and evidence was
from God that heard the
prayer. He said indeed he
would doe thus and thus
for thee: (as he told Da-
vid, *I would have given thee
much more.*) because thou
saidst to him, thou wouldst
walke

Chap. 5.

walke thus and thus, or didst vow this or that to him; thou failest in thy word, upon which God uttered his; and thereupon sayes God as to *Ely*, *Now it shall not be so*, and yet God had spoken it afore, and not *Satan* nor thine owne heart only.

4. When God doth put a restlesse importunity into the heart, maugre all discouragements. So in that *Psalm* 27. 4. *One thing I have desired, and I wil seek after it, that is, as I have sought it, so I will not leave seeking to God for it: when God maintaines this in the heart, it is a signe he heares, and will answer: for you know the*

Para-

§. 5.

Whē God puts a restlesse importunity into the heart, to pray for a particular mercy.

Chap. 5.

A double
importuni-
ty: one ac-
cepted, not
the other.

Parable, that the *unjust Iudge* heard her for her *importunity*; therefore when God puts an importunity into the heart, he meanes to heare.

Onely this likewise is to be added in this, There is a double importunity: one out of such an inordinate desire to a thing, as the heart knows not how to be without such a mer-
cie, and so continues to ask, but *asketh amisse*, and so *receives not*, *Iam. 5.* But there is an importunity joyned with a subjection to *Gods will*; which when it runs along with it, then God hath stird it up, and then looke for something to come; otherwise you may

may bee importunate, as
they seeke mee daily, when
yet God heard not, *Esay*
58.2.



CHAP. VI.

*Further Observations to
be made, on the dispositi-
ons and carriage of our
hearts, after Prayer: un-
till the issue of the thing
prayed for.*

NEXT: *after thou hast
prayed, observe, what
God doth towards thee.*

*As first, how hee doth
guide thy feet and heart
after praying: there is much
in that: that which was
the*

§ 1.

*Whē God
gives an o-
bedient de-
pendant
heart, in
walking
before
him.*

Chap. 6.

the Spirit of supplication in a man when he prayed, rests upon him as the spirit of obedience in his course; so as that dependence hee hath upon God for the mercy hee seekes for, is a speciall motive, & meanes to keep him fearefull of offending, and diligent in duty; to looke to his paths to walke and behave himselfe as becomes a suitor, as well as to come and pray as a suitor. Thus *David*, he walked by this principle, *Psal. 66. 18.* *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not heare me;* that consideration still came in as a curb unto sinne; and without this a man provokes God, and so casts himselfe

himselfe behind-hand againe, and by sinning loseth what ground hee had got by praying. Therefore *David, Psal. 145. 8, 9, 10.* when he was to pray, even as for his life, (as then he did, it being a deliverance from his enemies he sought) he specially prayes God to direct him and keepe him, that hee might not sin against him; for he knew by sinning hee should enervate and spoile all his prayers: not onely *heare me speedily* (sayes he) but also *Cause me to know the way wherein I should walke; Teach me to doe thy will;* this he especially prayes for, and more then for deliverance, for

G

else

Chap. 6.

else he knew God would not heare him. Therefore when thou art in treaty with God for any mercy, observe, doth God still after praying keep thee in a more obedient frame of spirit: it is a signe hee intends to answer thee; as in like manner, when hee keeps thee from using ill meanes, &c. When hee meant to give *David* the Kingdome, hee kept him innocent, and his heart tender, that it smote him but for cutting off the lap of *Sauls* garment: he was not so tender after. Therefore in *Psal. 18.* when hee was delivered from all his enemies, hee sayes, *God dealt with him according to his*

Chap. 6.

2

Whē God
gives a
heart to
waite for
& expect
the mercy.

uprightnesse: for I kept my
selfe from mine iniquity. So
also Psal. 27. 11.

2 When God after pray-
er strengthneth the heart
to waite for the mercy. So
Psal. 27. 14. David having
prayed, sayes to his soule,
Wait on the Lord, be of good
courage, and he will streng-
then thy heart. Honest men,
when they nourish hopes
in one that is in depen-
dence on them, who wait-
teth and is obsequious up-
on the hopes he hath of a
suite, use not to deny him:
it were dishonesty in the
to keep a man underhand,
and then frustrate his
expectations; Therefore
when God keeps thy soule
after praying in such a de-

G 2 pendant

Chap. 6.

pendant frame, looke for some good answer. And indeed when a man hath prayed long, in the end he begins to *wait* (as I may so say) *rather than pray* (though he pray still) because now he looks God should performe: before, and at first, he told the Lord he *desired* it, but now he can with some boldnesse tell him, that *he waits for it and expects it*. The hope of a godly man and his expectation should make him *ashamed* if it were not answered, therefore in this case answers ule to come.

Both these two last we have together joyned Psa. 37. 34. *Wait on the Lord, & keep his waies, and he shal exalt thee.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Observations to be made
after prayer, upon the is-
sue of what was prayed
for: and first, if accom-
plished, whether as the
fruit of prayers, or out of
common providence;
Helps herein.

WHen a man hath
thus waited, and
kept his way, then let him
observe the issue and con-
clusion of what he sought
for, how things are cast
by God. Now of necessity,
one of these two must fall
out, that either the thing
desired is accomplished, or
not accomplished; and in ei-
ther

Chap. 7.

ther of these he may come to spie out answers to his prayers ; for prayer may be answered, though the thing be not done.

I meane to insit severally on these.

§. I.

God sometimes answers the prayer fully in the way and manner desired.

I If the thing thou prayedst for doth come to passe, then what needst thou doubt of an answer, and whether God heard thee or no? For thou beholdest it with thine eyes: and so often it falls out, that God doth grant according to the desires of a mans heart; and not onely so, but also *fulfills his counsell* therein, as it is, *Psal. 20. 4.* that is, fulfills not onely his desire, and aime of his prayer, but in that
very

very way, by that very
meanes, which his judge-
ment and counsell pitch
upō in his own thoughts.
The *desire* of the heart
may be satisfied, when
God gives some other
thing, but the *counsell* of
the heart is then fulfilled,
when a man is answered
in that particular, which
his own judgment pitch
upon as best for him. For
counsell is an act of the
understanding, delibera-
ting about meanes to an
end, & directing to choole
a particular meanes tend-
ing to an end: so that as
Eliphaz sayes to *Iob*, 22.
27, 28. *Thou shalt make thy
prayer to God, and hee shall
hear thee: & decree a thing,*

Chap. 7.

and it shall be established to thee, that is, a man is guided to decree and pitch upon such mercies in his prayers, as God makes good in particular: hee saies what he would have, and God performs it: and this priviledge thou shalt have (sayes *El phaz* there) if thou wilt turne to him, and be acquainted with him, and receive the Law from his mouth: thou shalt not erre in praying, but what thou settest upon to pray for, shall be accordingly granted to thee; such a man shall have the priviledge, *Fingere sibi fortunam* in a right sense, to be his owne chooser, and carver of his owne mer-

mercies; and as Christ
saith, Be it according to thy
faith, so God saies some-
times, Be it according to thy
prayer; and Eliphaz speaks
of it as of a speciall favour,
that whereas other mens
prayers are answered ob-
liquely, thine sayes hee
shall be answered directly,
which is more comforta-
ble; as direct beames are,
and have more heate in
them then collateral and
oblique. Thus if a man
will heare God and obey
him, God will heare him:
for if a man be subject
to Christs Kingly Office,
his Prophetick Office shall
guide him, and cause him
not to erre in his Petiti-
ons, but by an unerring

Chap. 7.

providence & preinspired
 infused by his spirit; God
 will to guide him, as to ask
 evē that very thing which
 God intends to give;
 whereas of himselfe he
 knowes not what, nor how
 to aske. So David asked
 long life, and God gave it
 him, *Psalm. 21. 2, 3, 4.* God
 not onely gave him his
 hearts desire, but the re-
 quest of his lips; *v. 2.* Hannah
 askt a sonne, and God an-
 swered her in the very
 thing she desired, and
 therefore she called him
 Samuel, *1 Sam. 1. 20.* Be-
 cause (sayes she) I askt him
 of the Lord: and Verse 27.
 For this child I prayed, and
 the Lord (did not give an-
 other thing in stead of it,
 but)

but) hath given me my Portion I asked of him. So, I. Chro. 4. 10. Iabosh called on God (tis said) and God granted him the thing he requested. And thus God often deales with his children. And to this end hath God given us his Spirit; and made Christ Wisdome unto us, who knowes what is good for us, though we doe not. And hath therefore also commanded us to spye out mercies for our selves, and then come to him for them: and to this end hath made such particular promises of particular mercies, which he would have us have an eye unto in our prayers; all which is, because often he

meanes

Chap. 7. means to bestow the very things we aske.

Yet our hearts are often jealous, whether it be an answer to prayer, or out of common providence.

And yet because, although we have the very things wee did aske and desire, such is the jealousie & infidelity of our hearts, that we often discern not, nor acknowledge that it was our prayers, that obtained them from God: but we are apt, when once wee have them, either to look but to things below, and the second causes of them, though before wee did earnestly seeke them of God, or else still distrustfully to questio whether or no it was at our prayers that hee granted them, or out of common providence. Thus: *Ioh* in his

his distemper, *Job 9. 16.*
 although I had called, and
 God had answered me, yet
 (sayes he) I would not le-
 leave that he had hearkened
 to my voice, that is, not that
 he did it in respect to my
 prayer and request, be-
 cause he now deales so se-
 verely with me, For hee
 breaketh me with a tempest,
 Ver. 17. And thus doe
 our distrustfull hearts,
 (which are apt to bee un-
 satisfied with all the clea-
 rest pledges of Gods fa-
 vour, and still to miscon-
 strue and pervert them,)
 although God doth an-
 swer us upon our calling
 upon him, yet we will not
 beleeve that he hearken-
 ed to our prayer in it.
 Therefore

Chap. 7.

Therefore that you may be further inabled to discern, how, and when things you prayed for, come in by prayer; I give you these further directions.

§. 2.

Directions to helpe to discern this.

I From the manner of Gods performance: God discovers a more then ordinary hand of providence in things accomplished by prayer: instanced and discovered in 5. particulars.

1. When God doth a thing in answer to prayers, hee often doth it in such a maner, that his hand may bee in a more then ordinary maner seen in it. There are few prayers, wherein a man hath sought God much, but in the answers of them God discovers himselfe much, and turnes many great wheelles in the accomplishment of them, and manifests (as David desires, Psal. 17. 7.) his mar-

velous

valuable living kindness,
and indeed, when God
heares prayers, that have
beene a long while a ma-
king, Hee shewes usually
halfe a miracle one way
or other. ^{guined of}

Now God discovers
his immediat hand in the
answers of prayers many
wayes. ^{nothing to the way}

1. When hee carries a
thing through many diffi-
culties, when there were
a great many crooke wards
in a businesse prayed for,
the least whereof would
have kept the key from
turning: when God shall
make (as it were) a key on
purpose to unlocke it;
when God plots and con-
trives all the passages in a
businesse

1 By bring-
ing it to
passe
through
many dif-
ficulties.

Chap. 2

but in effect thou didst pray
 for, and so accomplish both
 it. This is a signe, it is a
 fruit of prayer, and that
 prayer had been making
 that say altho' while.
 So in bringing David to
 the Kingdom, Joseph out
 of prison, & likewise
 Peter out of prison, which
 was done at the prayers of
 the Church, &c. He
 was sleeping betweene
 two soldiers: if they had
 waked, he had beene dis-
 covered: and hee was in
 chains, but they fall off,
 ver. 6. 7. And the Keepers
 stood before the doore,
 but they mind him not,
 ver. 6. and when one
 watch is past, hee passeth
 undisturbed.

qui-

quietly through another, ver. 10. and when both those were past, an Iron gate flyes open of its own accord, ver. 10. Now such difficulties are there in many businesses, which yet in the end are accomplished by prayer: Iron chaines fall off, Iron gates, enemies hearts flye open of their own accord, and though not in that miraculous manner, by the meanes of an *Angel*, yet no lesse wonderfully.

Or secondly when God facilitates all meanes to accomplish the thing which was prayed for, so as all meanes doe in view conspire and combine in it, that thou hast winde and

Or secondly by facilitating all the means & causing them to conspire to accomplish it.

Chap. 7.

and ryde, and a faire day,
 and all the way paved; or
 as *David* sayes, *hast thy*
way made plaine before thee;
 and there falls out a great
 conjunction and meeting
 of many circumstancesto-
 gether to effect it, which
 had influence into it,
 whereof if any one had
 beene wanting, haply the
 thing had not been done;
 when the thing *prayed* for
 is thus granted, *prayer*
 then hath done it. Thus,
 when hee delivered the
 people of *Israel* out of
Egypt, which was the ac-
 complishment of their
 long desires and prayers,
 (*their cry came up the Text*
sayes) how were all things
 facilitated! they that de-
 tained

tained them doe them-
selves come, and intreate
them to goe out, yea, are
urgent, sayes the Text;
and that at midnight: nay,
hire them to goe out,
with their eare-rings; and
Pharaoh himselfe then
parts lovingly and fairely
with them, and desires
their prayers, *Blesse me also*:

Exod. 12.
31, 33, 35.
Ver. 32.

Yea, to shew there was
no resistance, the Text
sayes, *A Dog did not move
his tongue*. The brute
Creatures did not disturbe
the, though at midnight,
when those Creatures use
to be most obtrapeorous
through noies.

3. When hee doth it
suddenly, and accompli-
sheth the thing thou hast
long

3 By bring-
ing it to
passe sud-
denly and
unexpe-
ctedly.

Chap. 7

long prayed for, ere thou
 art aware of it: as the re-
 turne of the Captivity of
 Babylon, which was the
 conclusion of many pray-
 ers, was done in a trice,
 they were as men in a dream,
 Psal. 126. 1. they could
 scarce beleewe it was so,
 when it was done, it was
 because they had sowed
 many prayers which came
 up on the suddaine, Jer. 5.
 6. So Peter, hee was fast
 asleepe, and did not so
 much as dreame of deli-
 verance. So Ioseph deli-
 very out of prison, and
 advancement to bee the
 greatest man in the King-
 dome, the suddennesse of
 it shewed it was Gods re-
 membring of him, and
 hearing

Exod. 12.
 Jer. 5.
 Psal. 126.

Exod. 12.
 Jer. 5.
 Psal. 126.

hearing his prayers.

Chap. 7.

4 By doing above what was desired with addition of other mercies.

4. When God grants the thing with an over-plus, above what wee did ask, & casteth many other mercies in together with that which we long prayed for; this also may be a signe God did heare our prayers in it: for when he doth heare indeed, hee useth to doe above what wee did aske or thinke, thereby the more to overcome the heart. So *David* asked long life, and he gave him more then he asked, *Psal.* 21. 2, 3, 4, 5. So *Solomon* he asked but *wisdom*, and hee gave him more then he asked, *Peace, Riches, Honour*, and all with it, *1 Kin.* 3. 12, 13. *Hannah* shee asked

Chap. 7

and yet
in words
beholden
the law
of the
gospel

Iam. 1. 3.

5 By adding some speciall circumstance as a token of Gods speciall hand in it.

ked but one male childe, 1 Sam. 1. 10. but God gave her three sonnes more and two daughters. Chap. 2. 21. When prayers are answered, usually mercies come thicke, they come tumbling in; the thing we prayed for comes not alone: as when sinnes are punished, then miseries also they come like armies in troops upon us: as temptations likewise come together, and we fall into many of them at once, as S. James speakes: Thus doe mercies also.

5. When the thing is granted by prayers, there is often some particular circumstance of providence concurrent with it, which

which is a token for good, and sealeth to us that it is from God; such often as a man himselfe takes notice of, and which others take notice of also. *Shew mee a token for good*, sayes David, Psal. 86. 17. *that others may see it and be ashamed*: and such tokens doth God often make small circumstances to bee. Things small in themselves, may bee *magna indicia*, great signes and tokens: for example, *Moses and Aaron*, and the *Israelites* had long cryed to God for the deliverance of his people, and laid up many prayers; *their cry came up*, as was said; and when God doth deliver them, what

Chap. 7.

what tokens were there of good? and of G O D S hand in it, and of his answer to their prayers? The Text notes (as was observed before) *that a dog did not barke at their going out, Exod. 11. 7.* which was a small circumstance, but it was *magnum indicium*, and so intended by God; for the Text addes, *That ye may know that God puts a difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians.* This was a token of Gods hand, to over-rule the tongues of rude brute creatures, that use to stir at such unusuall noises, and at travellers especially in the night. So when *Isaac and Abraham, and his*

his servant also, had pray-
ed for a Wife for *Isaac*,
see by what a token God
shewed he had heard their
prayers; *Rebekkah* was the
first that came out to the
servant sent to bring a
wife for him: and if shee
be the woman appointed
for *Isaac* (saies the servant)
*Let her offer me drinke, and
my Camels also:* this was
a small thing in appea-
rance, but a great *indicium*
of Gods hand in it, and
therefore the servant bow-
ed at it, and worshipped:
and the signe in it selfe
was such, as argued a
good nature in her, and a
kinde courteous dispositi-
on, which therefore (it
may bee) hee singled out,

Gen. 23.

13, 14.

Chap. 7.

§ 3.
Observati-
on from
the time
wherein
the thing
prayed for
is accom-
plisht, as,

as a token of a meet wife,
as a thing especially to be
looked at in the mariage
choise.

Againe, the considera-
tion of the *time*, wherein
the things we have asked,
are granted, may much
help us to discern, whe-
ther it be in answer to our
prayers. For God who
doth all things *in weight
and measure*, shewes his
wisdom and love, as much
in the *season*, as in giving
the thing it selfe. G O D
considereth all *times* of
thy life, and still chooseth
the best and fittest to an-
swer thy prayers in, *In an
acceptable time have I heard
thee. So Esay 49.8. As Da-
uid (in like manner sayes)*
he

hee prayed in an acceptable time, *Psal. 69. 13.* So accordingly God answers in the best and most acceptable time to us; for *he waits to be gracious, for he is a God of judgement, Esay 30. 18.* that is, Hee is a wise God that knowes the fittest times and seasons, wherein to shew kindnesse, and to deale forth his favours in.

As first, it may be, that at that very time when thou hast beene most instant and earnest, yea even whilst thou art a praying or presently after, the thing is done and accomplished. To this purpose is that of *Esay 65. 24.* That as sometimes *he heares be-*

I

Sometime the thing is accomplished about the time wherein we are most instant in prayer.

Chap. 7.

fore they call (which argues much love to give mercies unsought) so also whilest they are speaking, I will heare, and grant the thing, which argues no lesse love; and he culls out that time on purpose, that they might rest assured that it was in answer to their prayer. Thus to assure *Hezekiah* his prayer was heard, God sent the Prophet in unto him whilest hee was a praying and weeping, with his head turned towards the wall. So *Isaac* going out to pray in the field, meets his *Rebekkah* then a comming; that blessing of a good Wife, being surely the great request temporall hee

Gen. 24 63

hee was then in Treaty with God for : this *Rebekkah* was the fruit of many prayers. So when *S. Peter* was in prison, the Church being gathered together to pray for him, *S. Peter* comes and knocks at the same houre, *Acts* 12. from the 12. ver. to the 18. So as it often falls out herein, as to the Ruler in the Gospel, *Iob.* 4. 52. who inquiring diligently, found that the same houre that *Christ* had said to him, *Thy sonne liveth, his son recovered, and so he beleaved, and his whole household :* So also here, that sometimes the thing is done, or the newes of it comes the same houre or soone after,

Chap. 7.

wherein a man was praying about it, and haply then when the heart was most stirred about it, more then at any time else: this is a signe it was an answer of prayers, and may help to confirme a mans faith in it, as that also did his.

2 When granted in the fittest time,

Or secondly, when it is the most acceptable and every way the fittest time to have the thing granted. At that time, 1. when thou *hadst most neede*, and 2. when thy heart was *most fit for it*. For in answering prayers, God aimes especially at two things: 1. To *shew his mercy*, that a man might magnific and exalt that:
And

And ^{2.} *To have the heart satisfied and filled with joy and contentment in his answer, and the thing made sweet, and a mercy indeed to him: in brieft, that his goodnesse might be delighted in, and his mercy exalted.* And for these two purposes he culls out such times, when we have most need; and also when our hearts are most subdued, and our lusts mortified. For then we are fittest to relish his goodnesse alone, and not to bee drawne away with the carnall sweetnesse that is in the thing. The one you have exprest, *Esay 30. 18. Hee waits to bee gracious to have his mercy exalted.* The se-

The fittest
time
knowne
two wayes.

Chap. 7.

cond intimated *James 5.*
Ye aske and receive not, be-
cause ye aske amisse, to con-
sume upon your lusts ; Such
 prayers, whilst the heart
 is in this temper, the Lord
 denies, or deferres in mer-
 cie till the heart bee wea-
 ned.

1 When
 wee have
 most need.

For the first of these:
 As, suppose thou diddest
 pray long for assurance of
 salvation, and joy in the
 Holy Ghost, and when
 thou hadst most need of
 it, either when *thy spirit*
would have failed without
 it, as *Esay 57. 16.* Or a-
 gainst some great afflicti-
 on approaching, or some
 great encounter with the
 world for the Name of
 Christ, then God filled thy
 heart

heart with it, &c. that was the fittest time: now hath God heard thy prayer. As *S. Peter* hee was in Prison, and had beene so for many dayes, as appears by the fourth and fifth verses, *Acts 12*. God could haue delivered him at any time, while the Church prayed for him, *ver. 5*. But God kept him in on purpose, till that very night, when in the next morning *Herod* meant to bring him forth to execution, and then God delivered him at the prayers of the Church; then was the most fit time; As the *Psalmist* sayes, *The full time to have mercy on him was come*. And then

Psal. 102.
17.

Chap. 7.

2. When
the heart
was best
prepared
to receive
it, and
most wea-
ned from
it.

to receive an answer, is a
signe God did it out of
speciall love, which love
hee *would have exalted by
thee, as Esay 30.18.*

If 2. when thy heart
was *most fit* for the mercy,
it was granted, then art
thou also heard in an ac-
ceptable time: for God
doth not with hold mer-
cies from those that are
his, out of want of love;
neither so much for what
is past, as for the present
evill disposition of their
hearts, whereby they are
unfit to receive them:
and in this sense likewise
may that bee understood,
that God *prepareth the
heart: and beareth the pray-
er, Psal. 10. 17.*

As

As first, when thy heart is most weaned from that temporall mercy (supposing it such) granted thee upon seeking of it : So *David*, when had hee the Kingdome in possession given him ? then, when hee was as a *weaned child*, and had his high thoughts (which haply at the first newes of it had risen in his minde) purged out, *Psal. 131. 2. I have no high thoughts, &c.* sayes hee then ; Thus, when thy heart had let all carnall ends goe, and had betaken it selfe alone to God, for thy portion to be had alone out of him, then the thing prayed for comes to passe : this was the fittest

Chap. 7.

Object.

fittest season.

But you will bee ready to say, To have a thing when my heart is taken off from it, and even contented not to have it, makes it to be as no mercy: for where there is no desire, there is no rejoycing.

Answer.

If thy desire bee taken off the thing, then thou wilt rejoyce the more in GOD now; and though the thing of it self should now give thee lesse satisfaction, yet God by the thing wil give thee more, and he will make it up; for thou wilt relish his love and sweetnesse in it now, which is *better then life*, and therefore much better

rer than that thing enjoyed ; and indeed the violence of the desire before, would have made it lesse sweet, for the thing alone would not have filled and contented that desire, when it was an inordinate lust, and so thou wouldst have beene vexed with it, rather than satisfied, and found a greater vanity in it: but now when it is become a subordinate desire unto God, that the desire is downe, and the heart quieted and contented with God in the thing : the heart sayes as she said, *I have enough.* So 2. likewise thou maist have an affliction thou prayedst long against taken off then,

Chap. 7.

Lev. 26. 41

64.

A third
sort of ob-
servations,
from the
answerable
proportion
betweene
Gods dea-
ling in the
accomplish-
ment of it,
and our
prayers.

then, when thy heart was
most willing to accept thy
punishment (as Moses's
phrase is,) and to submit
to God in it.

A third thing you are
to observe concerning
the accomplishment of
the thing prayed for,
whereby you may discern
whether granted in an-
swer to prayers, is, when
thou seest God in his dea-
lings with thee, and an-
swering of thee, to deale
in a kinde of proportion
with thy manner of pray-
ing and seeking of him,
and of walking with him
whilest thou were depen-
dant on him, for such or
such a mercy. And as you
may see a proportion be-
tween

tween sinnes and punishments, which are the rewards of them ; that you can say, such a sin brought forth this affliction, it is so like the Father : so you might see the like proportion, betweene your prayers, and your walking with God, and Gods answers to you, and his dealings with you. So did *David, Psal. 18. 24. According to the cleannesse of my hands hath he recompenced me, &c.* His speech notes some similitude or likeness: as for example, The more by-ends or carnall desires you had in praying, and the more you mingled of these with your holy desires, and the more

Chap. 7. more want of zeale, fervency, &c. were found in your prayers, the more you shall (it may be) finde of bitterneſſe mingled with the mercy, when it is granted; and ſo much imperfection, and want of comfort in it: ſo ſayes David in the ſame *Pſal. verſe 25.26. With the pure thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe pure.* Pure prayers have pure bleſſings; & *è contra: With the froward thou wilt ſhew thy ſelfe froward*; and againe, as you in praying ſometimes ſlackened and grew cold, ſo you might ſee the buſineſſe in like manner to coole, and caſt backward: as when *Moses hands were downe, A malek pre-*

prevailed; but when they were *lifted up*, *Israel* had the better, *Exod.* 17. 12. God let him see a proportion, which argued his prayer was the meanes of prevailing. A man findes in praying, that his suite sometimes sticks, and goes not on as he expected, this is because he gives not so good a fee as he was wont, and doth not ply *God*, and solícite him; but on the contrary, when hee was stirred up to pray, then still hee found things to goe well: by this a man may clearely see, that it was the praier which God did heare and regarded. Thus likewise when a man sees hills and dales in
a

Chap. 7.

a businesse, faire hopes often, and then all dasht againe, and the thing in the end brought to passe, let him looke back upon his prayers: didst not thou in like maner just thus deale with God? When thou hadst prayed earnestly, and thought thou hadst even carried it, then dash all againe, by interposing some sin, and thus againe and againe? Herein God would have you observe a proportion; and it may help you to discern, how, and when they are answered, and obtained by prayer; because God deales thus with you therein in such a proportion to your prayers.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

*Seven Observations more,
from the effects which
the accomplishment of
the mercy hath upon the
heart, &c.*

FOurthly, thou mayest
discerne whether they
bee in answer to thy pray-
ers, by the effects upon thy
heart.

As 1. If the thing that
is granted upon thy pray-
ers, draw thy heart more
neere unto God, it is then
certaine, that it was gran-
ted as an answer to thy
prayers. Things granted
out of ordinary provi-
dence onely, doe increase
our

§. 1.

If the
thing ob-
tained
drawes
the heart
neerer to
God, and
to reioyce
in his fa-
vour in it,
more than
in the
thing.

Chap. 8.

Psal. 69. 22.

Exod. 32. 6

our lusts, and are snares to us; as *Saul* gave *David* his daughter *Michol* to be a snare to him: So *their full tables are made snares*: so *G O D* gave the *Israelites* their will, the things they desired, but withall gave them up to their lusts, *Psal. 106. 15.* hee gave them their requests, but sent leanness into their soules; the *Quailes* might fat some of their bodies that survived, yet their soules grew leane: there was a curse upon their Spirits: this new delicate food made their bodies more lustfull, they did eat and drinke, and rose up to play. But things obtained by prayer are sanctified to us, for

Chap. 8.

1. Tim. 4. 5

for every thing is sanctified by prayer, so as it shall not insnare nor intangle our hearts: a thing obtained by prayer; as it came from God; so a man will returne it to God, and use it for his glory: So *Hannah* having obtained *Samuel* by prayer, shee returnes him unto God, *1. Sam. 1. 27*
28. For this childe I prayed, and God gave me my petition, and therefore also I have lent him to the Lord as long as hee liveth. If therefore thou findest this his dealing with thee, in answering thee, to be a kindly motive to cause thee to mourne for sin, and to bee as a restraint against sin, it is a signe it was the fruit
of

Chap. 8.

of praier: Thus it wrought with *David*, *Psal. 6. 8.* *Away from mee yee that work iniquity: God hath heard the voice of my weeping.*

Also if thou rejoycest in God, more than in the thing obtained: so *Hannab* begins her song when she blesteth God for her child; *My heart rejoyceth in the Lord, &c. 1. Sam. 2. 1.* Shee rejoyceth not so much in the gift as in the giver; and his favour more in this that her prayer was answered, then in the thing obtained: this is a signe of having obtained the mercy through prayers, when it is thus sanctified unto a mans spirit.

§. 2.

Prayer answered enlargeth the heart with thankfulness.

2 Prayers answered will

will inlarge thy heart
with thankfulness, and
thus usually they doe;
selfe-love makes us more
forward to pray, than to
give thanks; for nature is
all of the craving and ta-
king hand: but where
grace is, there will be no
eminent mercie gotten
with much struggling, but
there will be a continued
particular thankfull re-
membrance of it a long
while after, with much in-
largement: and *As prayers*
abounded, so will thanksgi-
ving abound also. Hannah,
shee makes a Song, *1. Sam.*
1. 2. Great blessings that
are wonne with prayer,
are worne with thankful-
nesse: such a man will not
aske

Chap. 8.

ask new, but he will with-
all give thanks for old.
Thankfulnesse, of all du-
ties, proceeds from pure
grace, therefore if the spi-
rit stirs thee unto it, it is a
signe he made the prayer;
*What thanks shall I render
to God, for the joy I have in
you, saith S. Paul, 1. Thess. 3.
9, 10?* So in all his other
Epistles, all those hee
writes to, as he prayes for
them, so hee tells them,
he gives thanks for them,
and for their graces which
he had prayed for. And if
answering prayers for
others, makes *S. Paul* so
thankfull, what when for
himselfe? Prayer and
thanks, are like the dou-
ble motion of the lungs,
the

the ayre that is sucked in by prayer, is breathed forth againe by thanks: Is thy heart afresh enlarged, as to mourne for past sins long since committed, so in like manner, to give thanks for past mercies wonne with long prayers, and this for a long while after? it is a sign that they were obtained by prayer.

3 If the mercy obtained doth encourage thee to goe to G O D another time, to pray againe the more confidently and fervently, it is a signe thou hast got the former that way: For the *Holy Ghost* having once shewed thee this way of procuring mercy, hence it is, thou

I

art

§.3.

If this encourageth thee to go to God againe.

Chap. 8.

art thus ready to take the same course another time. *Psal. 116.2. The Lord hath heard mee, and I will call on him as long as I live.* I know (sayes hee) now what course to take, if I be in any want, even to call upon him; and he calls upon others to doe so too.

§ 4.

It makes a man carefull to performe his vows made in prayer, to obtaine it.

4 When God having heard thy prayers upon solemne vowes made by thee, thy heart is made carefull to pay those vowes, which thou didst make in the time of thy suing to GOD for that mercy, this may be an argument to thee, the thing being granted, that thy prayer was heard. For first, it argueth, that thy heart

heart it selfe doth secretly make such an account, that upon them God did grant the thing, and thou dost therefore make conscience to return all again to God in service, as the condition of thy Indentures made with him; and as an homage due, and an acknowledgement for ever, that such a mercy was won by prayer; and by this preservest the memory of the receipt of that mercy: vowes being of the nature of homage: and secondly, in this also it is an evidence, that the thing was obtained by prayer, in that *God* calls for those vowes from thee, by his Spirit in thy heart,

Chap. 8.

and stirs thee up to perform them ; it argues that in relation to thy prayers answered, He takes them as dues from thee, that having dispatcht thy suite, He now calls for what was agreed to bee given him when it should bee performed. And thirdly, in that also he doth accept the payment of these thy vows of thee, he acknowledgeth that those vowes and prayers were heard: for as *Manoah* said in another case, *If hee meant to have destroyed us, hee would not have accepted a sacrifice*: so in this case it may be said, if God had not heard thy prayers, hee would not have accepted thy

Judg. 13. 23

thy vowes after thy praying. Thus David, Psal. 66. 13, 14. *I will pay thee my vowes, which my lips have uttered, and my mouth hath spoken, when I was in my trouble;* the reason follows, v. 17, 19. because that *Verily God hath heard me, when I cryed to him :* and so Eli-phaz in Iob doth connect and hang these two together, Iob 22. 27. *Thou shalt make thy prayer to him, and he shall heare thee, and thou shalt pay thy vowes :* This which he speakes of paying his vowes, was not onely as it was to be his duty, but also as a consequent that would follow the other, that when his prayers should be heard,

Chap. 8.

he thereupon would performe his vowes: for his scope is to move *Iob* to turne to God, shewing what benefit would accrue to him by it, and amongst others this: The hearing his prayers, and performing his vowes.

5 If a man sees by faith, and acknowledgeth *God* sole hand in the accomplishment.

5 When thou art enabled by faith, to see clearly *Gods* hand shewed forth in the effecting of that mercy over and above the power of second causes, and to acknowledge it to his glory: for the truth is, one maine cavilling reason in our blinde hearts, whereby wee are usually hindred and put by from apprehending our prayers to be answered, when yet

yet the thing is done, wee shall find to be, that our eyes are terminated and bounded in second causes, and not raised to see Gods hand in the thing: therefore on the contrary, when God inableth thee to see that hee hath done thee this kindnesse, so as thy minde is cleere in it, this is a fruit of his hearing thy prayers: And this you will usually finde to be true, that *so much faith and dependance* as you had upon God in prayer for the obtaining of a mercy, *so much faith and acknowledgement* you will have in the accomplishment of it. Parallel with this rule is that other, which in a-

Chap. 8.

nother ease is usually given, that in performance of duties, so much as the soul did goe out of it selfe to God, for strength to performe them, so much, when they are performed, will the heart acknowledge *Gods* assistance and be humbled: And this is a signe of prayer being heard upon this ground, because Gods end of hearing prayers is, that wee might glorifie him. So *Psal.* 50. 15. *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify mee.* Therefore when the heart hath prayed much for a mercy, with dependance before the obtaining of it, and then

is

is enabled to exalt God when it is obtained, it is a signe that God did it in relation to those prayers. For there is that connexion made betweene these, as between the cause and the effect, *I will heare thee, and thou shalt glorifie me.* David, when he was delivered out of all his troubles, (as when hee made that 18. *Psalm*. he was, as appears by the title of it) then at the 6. verse, he relates how he had prayed, and how hee was heard; and see thereupon how his heart was enlarged to acknowledge God alone to have done all, in the rest of that *Psalm*; so from the 27. and also from the

Chap. 8.

§. 6.

With the
mercy,
sometimes
a speciall
evidence
comes in,
that it is
obtained
by prayer.

31. ver. When wee see
Angels from God, be-
yond the power of se-
cond causes descending,
it is a signe, that prayers,
as Angels, first ascended,
and obtained that mercy.
Thus also the Church
Esay 26. having obtain-
ed those deliverances by
prayer, ver. 17. (for which
there she makes that song
by way of thankfultnesse)
she ascribes all unto God,
ver. 12. *Thou hast wrought
all our workes for us,* and
ver. 18. *Verily we have not
wrought any deliverance in
the earth.*

6 When with the mer-
cy there commeth the as-
surance of Gods love, and
an evidence of his favour,
when

when G O D sends not a bare token only, but a letter also with it, to beare witnesse of his love, in which the token is wrapt. I need not make that a sign, for when this comes with a mercy, it carries its owne evidence, you will then know well enough that it is the fruit of prayer.

7 Lastly, it will be evident by the *event*; things obtained by prayer have few thornes in them, the curse is taken out, but what comes but by ordinary providence, comes as it were up of it selfe alone, and like the earth untilld, is full of thornes, and bryers, and many vexations:

§.7.

By the event; things obtained by prayer, prove really and stable mercies.

Chap. 8.

xations : The reason is, for what comes in by prayer comes as a blessing, and *so no sorrow is added to it*; and also because prayer killeth those inordinate lusts, which is the cause of that vanity and vexation which is in the things enjoyed. *But when the blessing of God maketh rich, he addeth no sorrow with it, Prov. 10. 22.* Things long deferred, at last obtained by prayer, prove most comfortable, and in a settled manner such; they prove standing and stable blessings; and what trouble the heart was put to in the deferring, it is recompenced by the more settled constant unmixed sweetness.

nesse in the enjoying;
prayer having long per-
formed it, and the thing be-
ing steeped therein, it
proves exceeding plea-
sant. So *Prov. 13. 12. Hope*
deferred makes the heart
sicke, but when the desire
comes, it is a tree of life, and
heales that sicknesse, and
abundantly comforts the
heart. Thus *Isaac* found
Rebekkah a great blessing,
and a comfortable wife to
him, *Gen. 24. ult.* Such a
comfort also was *Isaac* to
Abraham, *Gen. 17. 18, 19.*
A sonne indeed, a sonne of
laughte, as his name sig-
nifies: and such was *Samuel*
to *Hannah*, shee had
not onely a sonne of him,
but a good son, a blessed
son,

Chap. 9.

son, a Prophet, and the Judge of the people of God : whereas *Jacob* getting the blessing, but without prayer, how imbittered was it to him, (though a blessing to him in the event) by twenty yeeres banishment from his mothers house ? When *Israel* themselves set up a King, but not *by me*, as God saies, what a punishment was he to them? *given in wrath, and taken away in anger :* **Hos. 13. 11.**

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Considerations to quiet the heart, and to help it to discern an answer to, and acceptation of the prayer when the thing is not accomplished.

BUT now the next and more difficult question is, *When the thing is not granted*, how shall we then discern and know, that God doth notwithstanding heare the prayer?

Concerning which, I must premise this, that it is true, that alwayes the very thing it selfe desired is not granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

Christ

§ 1.

The thing prayed for is not alwaies granted, when yet the prayer is heard.

Chap. 9.

Christ prayed, *the Cup might passe from him*, which though some interpret the word *passing*, for the short continuance of the brunt, and that therefore in that respect hee was heard directly in what he asked: yet if so, why was that clause *if it be possible*, added? that argues his petition was for a totall removall, yet with subjection to Gods will; for he knew there was no great impossibility in a short removall of it: nay, it was impossible but that it should passe, *Acts 2. 24.* But howsoever, it is plain in *Moses*, about his going into *Canaan*: *Deut. 3. 26.* *I besought the Lord,*
sayes

*sayes hee, ver. 23. and hee
was angry with mee, and
would not heare me. ver. 26.*

Likewise ere I come to resolve the case, an objection is also to be removed, which is,

That if the Spirit of
G O D doth make every
faithfull prayer in us, as
Rom. 8. 26. it is said Hee
doth; *wee know not what to
pray for, but the Spirit help-
eth our infirmities, &c.* and
he searcheth the deep things
of God, as it is said, *1 Cor. 2.*
that therefore hee know-
ing that G O D will not
grant such a thing, you
may think that he should
not stirre up the heart to
pray for that which God
meanes to deny, but al-
wayes

Chap. 9.

wayes guide the heart a-right, and not let us erre or misse in the things wee *pray* for. To this, in brieffe by way of answer.

An objection answered:

That though the Spirit knows Gods mind, and teacheth us what to pray for; yet the thing prayed for may not bee granted.

I. The Spirit makes not prayers in us, alwayes according to what Gods secret will and foreknowledge is, but according to his revealed will to us, both in his word, and in his providence, as things therein are presented to us, and doe lie before our view, and so not alwayes according to what hee meanes to doe, but according to what it is our duty to pray most for: for hee concurreth to assiste us to *pray*, as he doth in *preaching* or using other such like

like meanes and Ordinances, wherein though the spirit knowes whom God meanes to convert, whom not, yet he assists us Ministers in our spirits oftentimes as much to *preach* to those hee meanes not to convert, as to those hee meanes to convert: Hee dealing with us therein according to what is our duty, not according to what is his decree.

Againe, secondly, that phrase helps to answer this, when hee is said to *helpe our infirmities*, and therefore not according to his owne vast knowledge, doth he frame our *prayers*, but so, as hee applies his assistance to our infirme,

Chap. 9.

infirmes, weake, and narrow apprehensions, and stirres up desires in us to such things, as according to our knowledge wee are in duty to conceive, and which by all wee can see, by what is afore us revealed in his providence, we thinke to be most for our good, and his glory; and God accepts such *desires as from us*, but yet *doth for us* according to the largenesse of his owne love.

§. 2.

A mistake to pray absolutely for such blessings as are not absolutely promised.

And so now to come to the case propounded, and therein unto helps to pacifie, and direct the heart about those *prayers* at which the things are not granted.

And

And first, how diddest thou frame thy *prayer* for that thing which is denyed thee? Didst thou *pray* for it absolutely, and peremptorily as simply best for thee? thou must not then think much, if such a *prayer* bee denyed, for therein thou wentest beyond thy commission: but if thou didst pray for it conditionally, and with an (if) as *Christ* did, *if it be possible* (which instance is a strong ground for such kinde of *prayers*) and *not my will, but thy will be done*, so, as thou didst referre it unto, and trust *Gods* judgement in the thing, and not thine owne, onely didst put him in mind as thy duty

Chap. 9.

In which
when we
are denied
we are to
rest in
Gods judg-
ment as
best for us
and so in-
terpret. the
prayer an-
swered.

§ 3.
There may
be a reser-
vation in
the denial,
for some
greater
mercy.

duty was, of what was re-
presented to thee as best
for thee in view, and so
left it to him to cast, and
didst referre it to His will
and wisdom: Then thy
prayer may be most fully
answered and heard, and
yet the thing denied, and
thou art to interpret, and
God takes meaning and
mind revealed in the e-
vent in the best sense,
which way soever it falls:
for otherwise, CHRIST
had not been heard, when
yet, the Text sayes, *Hee*
was heard in all hee feared,
Hebr. 5.7.

2. Observe, if there
were not a *reservation* in
that denial, for some grea-
ter and further mercy,
whereof

whereof that deniall was
the foundation. Thus
oftentimes some great
crosse is prevented, by the
deniall of a thing, which
we were urgent for: if we
had had many of our de-
sires, we had been undone:
So it was a mercy to *Da-
vid*, that his childe was
taken away, for whose life
he was yet so earnest, who
would have been but a li-
ving monument of his
shame. It was also a mer-
cy to *David*, that *Absalom*
was taken away, (whom
surely he *prayed* much for,
for hee loved him much)
who if he had lived, might
have beene the ruine of
him and his house. As a
wicked mans deliverance
and

Chap. 9.

and the granting his request layes a foundation, and is a reservation of him to a worse Judgement : So, the deniall of a Godly mans *prayer* is for his greater good, and is laid as a foundation of a greater mercy : ² and againe, oftentimes the very deniall breaks a mans heart, and brings him nearer to *God*, puts him upon searching into his wayes, and estate, and in his *prayers* to see what should be amisse therein, which alone is a great mercy, and better then the thing, seeing by the losse of that one thing hee learns how to *pray* better, and so to obtaine a hundred better things

Chap. 9.

things afterward. Christ desired the Cup might passe, it did not; and that was the foundation of our salvation, & the way to His glory: Hee being to passe through that suffering into His glory: The woman that had the bloody issue, though shee used many meanes, and haply *prayers* among the rest, and all in vaine, yet none tooke effect; that in the end shee might come to Christ, and have both body and soule healed at once.

3 Observe if there be not a *transmutation* and a *translation* or turning of the thing desired into some other greater blessing of the same kind: for

K

God

§. 4.

There may be a transmutation of the thing denied, into some other blessing that is better of the same kind.

Chap. 9.

God (*all whose wayes are mercy and truth to His people*) doth improve, husband, and lay out the precious stocks of their prayers, to the best advantage, in things, whereby the greatest returns and gains may accrue: as old *Iacob* laid not his Hand of blessing as *Ioseph* would have guided them, but laid the right hand upon the younger Sonne, whom *Ioseph* did set at his left: So often doth God take off his hand of blessing from the thing we *prayed* for, and laies & discovers it in another more for our good: and as God giving *Isaac* the power and priviledge to blesse a sonne, though

Isaac

Isaac hee intended it for Esau, yet God unbeknown to him transmitted it to Iacob, yet so, as the blessing was not lost: Thus is it in our *prayers* for blessings both upon our selves and others. There is often a *transmutation*, never a *frustration* of them: which may as truely and directly bee called an answer to the *prayer*; As if a Factor beyond Sea, when the owner sends for such and such commodities, supposing them more vendible and advantagious, but the Factor knowing the state of things, and the prices, sends him over in stead of them, such as shall sell better,

Chap. 9.

and bring in more profit, may be said to answer his letters, and that better, then if hee had sent those very commodities he writ for; Thus *Abrahams* prayers for *Ishmael* were turned for *Isaac*: *David's* for the Childe to *Solomon*.

§. 1.

God answers to the ground of our prayers.

4 Observe if in the end God doth not answer thee still according to the ground of thy prayer: that is, see if that holy end, intention, and affection, which thou hadst in prayer, be not in the end fully satisfied, though not in the thing thou didst desire: for God answers, *Secundum cardinem*, according to the hinge which the prayer turnes upon.

As

As when a General is sent out with an Army, by a King or a State, who give him many particular directions, how to order and dispose, and manage the war, although in many particulars that fall out, wherein they could not foresee to give so punctuall and particular directions, he swerve from the directions, yet if he keeps to the intent of their Commission, and doth what is most advantageous for their ends, he may bee said to keepe to his Commission. For as they say of the Law, *Mens legis est lex, the mind of the Law is the Law*, not the bare words it is printed in: so

Chap. 9.

the *Meaning of the Spirit* is the prayer, *Rom. 8. 27.* and not simply the things desired, wherein wee expresse those our desires: and still the meaning, the intent, the ground of our prayers shall be answered. To open this, the maine ends, and meanings of our hearts in our requests are Gods glory, the Churches good, and our owne particular comfort and happinesse: we can desire but comfort, and a man looketh out, and spieth out such a particular mercie, which hee thinketh tends much to Gods glory, and his happinesse, and yet that thing is denied; yet notwithstanding
God

In
wh
an
w
re
G
m
be
an
te
p
iv

T
b
v
t
f
s
n

God will answer him according to the meaning of his prayers, his glory shall certainly be advanced, even for that prayer of his, some other way, and his comfort made up, which is the common desire of all mankind: and thou canst have but comfort, let the thing be what it will that conveys it to thee; and God will take order that that comfort thy soule desired, thou shalt have come in one way or other, which when it doth, thou canst not but say thy prayers are heard. For as God fulfils his promises, so hee heares prayers, there is the same reason of both:

Chap. 9.

now God hath promised, *Hee that leaves Father and Mother, shall have an hundred fold*: not in *specie*, as we say, in *kinde*, this cannot alwayes bee fulfilled, for an hundred Fathers he cannot have. God fulfills it not therefore alwayes in the same kinde, but in some other things, which shall be more then a hundred Fathers would bee.

Moses hee *prayer* hee might goe into *Canaan*, God answers the ground of his *prayer*, though not in the matter in it expressed and desired, and that both for *Moses* his comfort and his owne glory; for hee takes him up to
heaven,

heaven, the true *Canaan*, whereof that *Canaan* was but a type, and hee appoints *Ioshua* a fresh and a young man, comming on in the world, and one whom *Moses* himselfe had tutored and brought up, and was his pupill, servant and attendant, *Num.* 6. 11, 28. and this was more for Gods glory, for *Ioshua* was therein to bee the type of Christ leading us to heaven, which the Law (of which *Moses* was the type) could not bring us unto by reason of the weaknesse of it; and he being yong did it better: and it was not so much also for Gods glory, that one man should doe all;

Chap. 9.

and whereas *Moses* desired to have the honour of it; in that his servant that attended him, and had been brought up by him, and had all from him, that hee was the man should doe it, was well-nigh as great an honour to *Moses*, as if hee had beene the leader himselfe. And so *David* when hee desired to build the Temple and an house to God, for the like reasons God denied it, but yet honoured him to prepare the materials, and to draw the patterne, as also in that his Son did it, who was therein also the like type of Christ, being a *Prince of peace*, but *David* a man of blood and war,
and

Chap. 9.

and likewise God accepted this of *David*, as if he had built it, and will recompence him as much.

5. Observe, if in the thing which thou hast prayed much about, though it be denyed thee, yet if God doth not endeavour to give thee (as I may so speake) all satisfaction that may be, even as if hee were tender of denying thee, and therefore doth much in it for thy prayers sake, though the conclusion proves otherwise, as being against some other purpose of his, for some other ends: As when hee denied *Moses* to goe into the Land of *Canaan*, hee did it with much

§.6.

God when hee denies, yet sometimes yeelds far in it, to give satisfaction to his childe.

Chap. 9.

much respect (as I may so speak with reverence) to *Moses*: he yeelded as far as might bee, for hee let him leade them, till hee should come to the very borders; and hee let him see that good Land, carrying him up to an hill, and (as it is thought) by a miracle inabled his sight to view the whole Land; and the man hee chose to performe this work, was his servant, which was a great honour to *Moses*; that one brought up by him should succeed him. So when *Abraham* prayed for *Ishmael*, *Oh let Ishmael live in thy sight*, Gen. 17. 18. God went as far in granting his request as might be;

be ; for, sayes hee, ver. 20. *I have heard thee, and I have blessed him, and I will make him fruitfull, and multiply him exceedingly, and hee shall beget twelve Princes ; but my covenant I will establish with Isaac.* So likewise, when in casting that thing, thou didst seeke at his hands, he shews an extraordinary hand in turning it ; it is a signe he had a respect to thee, that hee would vouchsafe to discover his hand so much in it ; let the thing fall which way it will, if Gods hand appeare much in it, thou mayest comfortably conclude, that there is some great thing in it, and that prayer wrought that miracle

Chap. 9. racle in it, to dispose it so; and that there is some great reason why hee denies thee, and a great respect had to thy prayers, in that he is pleased to discover so extraordinary a providence about it.

§. 7.
Observe the effects that denials have upon the heart. As first, if a man doth acknowledge God righteous in it, &c.

Lastly, looke into the effect of that deniall upon thine owne heart; as,

I If thy heart be enlarged to acknowledge God, to be holy and righteous in his dealings with thee, and thine own unworthinesse the cause of his denying thee. Thus we often find the Saints expressing themselves in their prayers: that *Psalm. 22.* though typically made of Christ; yet as it was penned

Chap. 9.

ned by *David*, and as it may concerne his person, it may serve for an instance for this, *I cry in the day time, but thou hearest not*: this might have made him jealous of God; but saies he, *Thou art holy, &c.* and dealest now with me in an holy manner, and art just in it: *Others have called on thee*, and have been heard, though I now for my unworthinesse am denied: *But I am a worme*. It might have put a man off, when he should think, others are heard, but not I, but it puts not him off, but humbles him, *I am a worme, &c.* And *Thou art holy*.

2 If God fill thy heart with

Secor ,,
if God fill
the heart
with a holy
content-
ment in
the deniall.

Chap. 9.

with an holy contentment in the deniall; if he speak to thy heart, as he did to *Moses*, when hee denied him, *Deut. 3. Let it suffice thee*; if as to *S. Paul*, when hee was so earnest about removing that buffetting, if thou gettest but such an answer as that to him, *My grace is sufficient*; or that some such like consideration is dropt in that stayes thee: It was the effect of *Dauids* seven dayes fasting, that he did so contentedly beare the losse of the Childe, which his servants thought would have overwhelmed him, *2. Sam. 12. 19, 20, 21*. But a consideration was dropt in, which was the fruit of his prayer,

Chap. 9.

prayer, *That he should goe to him, not bee returne hither; and his minde was comforted thereby, in so much, as it is said, ver. 24. That he comforted Bathsheba also.*

3 If thou canst bee thankfull to God out of faith, that God hath cast and ordered all for the best, though hee hath denied thee; and although thou seest no reason, but that the thing prayed for, would have beene for the best, yet art thankfull upon the deniall of it, out of faith resting in Gods judgement in it: As *David*, in all those forementioned places was, *Thou art holy, that inhabitest the praises*

Thirdly,
if the heart
be thank-
full out of
faith, when
denied.

Chap. 9.

praises of Israel; he praises God for all this: David before he did eate, after his seven dayes fasting for the childe, arose, And went first into the Temple and worshipped, 2. Sam. 12. 20. and of what kinde of worship it was, appeares by his anointing himselfe and changing his raiment, which was in token of rejoycing and thanksgiving, and it fell out to him according to his faith, for presently after, Solomon was begotten, vers. 24.

§.4.

If the heart be not discouraged, for continuing still to pray for other things.

4 If thou canst pray still and givest not over, although thou standest for mercies which thou missest; if when thou hast mercies

mercies granted, thou fearest most, and when denied, lovest most, and art not discouraged, thy prayers are heard, *Psal. 80. 4.* Though God seemed angry with their prayers, yet they pray, and expostulate with him, and give not over, for they made that *Psalm* as a Prayer, *And how long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people? So Psal. 44. 17.* Though wee are cast among Dragons, yee wee have not bene false in thy Covenant. So say thou, I will pray still, though I never have an answer in this life. It moves ingenuous natures to see men take repulses and denials well, which proud

Chap. 10

proud persons will not
doe: and so it moves
God



CHAP. X.

Application: *A reproofe
of those that pray, but
looke not after the returne
of their prayers: The
causes of this neglect.*

*A reproofe
of those
that pray,
but looke
not after
the returne
of their
prayers.*

THe use of all is, to re-
prove those, who put
up prayers, and are ear-
nest in begging, but looke
not after them when they
have done, no more than
if they had not prayed:
who still venture, & have
a great stock of prayers
going,

going, but looke not after
the returns that are made,
cast not up their com-
mings in and gainings by
prayers; and when they
have prayed, sit down dis-
couraged, as not making
account in earnest that
ever they shall heare of
their prayers againe, even
as if they had been but as
words cast away: *as beat-
ing the ayre; as brend cast
upon the waters,* which they
thinke sinks, or is carried
away, and they shall finde
it no more: but herein
you despise Gods Ordi-
nance, and erre, *not knowing
the power of prayers;* and
ye contemne the Lord.
But you wil say as they in
the Prophet said, *Where-*
in

Chap. 10 *in doe wee contemne him?* if you askt a man a question, and when you had done, did turne your back upon him, as scoffing *Pilate* askt in scorne of Christ, *What is truth?* but would not stay for an answer, did you not contemne him? as not to answer when a question is asked you, is contempt, so not to regard the answer made, when you have beene earnest in begging, is no lesse contempt also: if you had writ letters to a very friend about important businesse, and had earnestly solicited him for an answer, and hee were carefull in due time to send one, if you should make

make account to heare of him no more, should you not wrong him in your thoughts? Or if hee did write, if you should not vouchsafe to reade over his answer, were it not a contempt of him? so is it here, when you have been earnest with God for blessings, and regard not the answer: and because verily this is a fault among us, I will therefore endeavour to discover to you the causes and discouragements, which though they keepe you not from praying, yet from this earnest expectation, and reall, and true making account to heare of answers of your prayers; onely my scope is, not to

The causes
of this neglect,
are of
two sorts.

Chap. 10

to shew you so much the reasons, why God denies you many requests, as why even in your owne hearts you are discouraged after you have prayed, as if they would not bee answered, although God doth answer them. These discouragements are partly *temptations*, partly *sinfull impediments* wherein wee are more faulty.

1 Temptations, want of assurance; as 1. That because your persons are not accepted your prayers are not.

1 Because your assurance that your persons are accepted, is weake, therefore your confidence that your prayers are heard, is weake also: For as God doth first accept the person, and then our prayers: so the believe, that

that God doth accept our persons is that which also upholds our hearts in confidence that our prayers shall be granted: this you may finde in 1 *Iohn* 5. 13, 14, 15. in the 13. *vers.* he sayes, *These things have I written to you, that ye may know you have eternall life: and upon that assurance this will follow, Vers. 14, 15. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we aske any thing according to his will, he beares us, &c. And if we know he beares us, we know we have the petitions wee desired of him. Marke how he links these three together, as effects and consequences each of other. 1. These*

L *things*

Chap. 10

things I write unto you, that you may be assured, that life and heaven is yours, as in 12. and 13. verses. And upon that 2. this confidence wil follow in your hearts, That God hears you, that is, that you have his cares open to you, and his heart enlarged towards you: and then 3. if you be assured that God heares you, then from this will follow an assurance, that You shall have any thing granted you desire; yea, and he makes this one of the maine and immediate effects of Assurance of justification; therefore he sayes, this is the confidence that we have in him; that is, this effect there is of this confidence,
for

For whereas they might
say, what benefit will ac-
crue to us by this assu-
rance? why this saies hee,
which is one of the great
and maine priviledges of
a Christian, even assurance
that God will heare him;
and not only so, but grant
him all his prayers. For
when a man is assured
God hath given him his
Son, he will then easily be
induced to beleeeve and
expect, *How shal he not with
him give mee all things?*
Rom. 8. 32. If once he looks
upon God as a Father, he
will then easily conceive
that which Christ sayes,
*If Fathers that are evill can
give good things to their
Children, how much more*

Chap. 10

shall not your Father give his spirit, and all good things to them that aske them: and if he gave his Son, when wee did not pray to him, how much more shall hee not with him give us all things wee pray for? If a man comes to sue to any man whose mind he knew not, whether hee loved him or not, he would have small hope or expectation of having his suite granted, though hee came againe and again; but if he be assured he is in favour with him, according to that degree of favour, hee supposeth himself to stand in with him, hee is assured and confident of obtaining his request.

2 Discouragement is the weaknesse of their prayers : though a man thinks his person is accepted, yet alas sayes he, my prayers are so poore and weake, as surely God will never regard them. To remove which, let mee first aske thee this question: Doest thou pray with all thymight? then though *that thy might* be weak in it selfe, and in thine owne apprehension such, yet because it is all the might which thou hast, and which grace hath in thee, it shall be accepted. *For God accepts according to what a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

2 Cor. 8. 12.

Chap. 10
2 Of the weaknesse of our prayers: which is answered by three things.

I

L 3

2 Thou

Chap. 10

2

2. Thou art to consider that God doth not heare thee for thy prayers sake, though not without them, but *for his Names sake*, and *his Sons sake*, and because thou art his child, as the mother when her child cryes (suppose it be a weake child) doth not neglect to heare and relieve it: but tenders it not because it doth cry more lowd, but because it cries; and pities it the more the weaker it is.

3

3. Againe, though the performance in it selfe be weake, yet considered as a prayer, it may be strong, because a weake prayer may set the strong God a worke, as faith for the act

of

of it, as produced by us may be weak, yet because its object is Christ, therefore it justifies: so it is in prayer, it prevailes, not because of the performance it selfe, but because of the name, which it is put up in, even Christs name; and therefore as a weake faith justifies, so a weake prayer prevailes as well as a stronger; and both for the like reason in both, for faith attributes all to God, and so doth prayer; for as faith is meerly a receiving grace, so prayer a begging grace. And therefore dost thou think thy prayers are accepted at all, notwithstanding their weaknesse? if

Chap. 10

that they are accepted, then they must be accepted as prayers, now if they be accepted as prayers, then as effectuell motives to prevaile with God to grant the thing you aske; for if hee should not accept them to that end, for which they were ordained, it is as if hee accepted them not at all. As therefore when he approves of any mans faith as true and sincere, hee approves and accepts of it to that purpose, for which it was ordained, which is to save and justifie, and to this end doth as fully accept the weakest act of faith, as the strongest; so is it with their prayers, which being

being ordained as a means to obtaine mercies from him, if hee accepts them at all, it is with relation to the accomplishment of them, which is their end.

4. Men are mistaken in judging of the weaknes of their prayers, they judge of the weaknesse of their prayers by their expressions, and gifts in performing them, or by the stirring and overflow of affections, whereas the strength & vigor of prayer should be estimated from the faith, the sincerity, the obedience, the desires exprest in it. As it is not the lowdnesse of a Preachers voice, but the

L 5 weight

Chap. 10

weight and holinesse of the matter, and spirit of the Preacher, that moves a wise, and an intelligent hearer : so not gifts, but graces in prayers are they that move the Lord. The strength of prayer lies not in words, but in that it is fitted to prevaile with God ; one prayer is not more strong then another, further then it is so framed as it hath power with God more or lesse, as of *Iacob* it is said, *he had power with God, Hos. 12.* Now prayers move God, not as an Orator moves his hearers, but as a child moves his father : two words of a childe humbled, and crying at his fathers

thers feet, will prevaile more then penned orations. *Rom. 8.* It is *the meaning of the spirit*, that God lookes unto, more then the expressions: for the *groans* there are said to be *unutterable*. *Hezekiahs* expressions were so rude and broken, that he sayes, *Esay 38. 14.* that he did but *chatter*, (hee being then sick,) *even as a crane*, yet God heard them.

A third discouragement is faylings of answers; I have prayed often and long, and I have been feldome or never answered, and therefore I make little account of my prayers, that they are heard: others have the renewes
of

3. So often failings of answers: answered by foure things.

Chap. 10

of their prayers comming in, but I doe misse whatsoever almost I stand for: Therefore say they as those, *Why have we fasted, and thou regardest it not? Isay 58.3.*

I

To remove this, consider, 1. that thou hast the more reason to wait, for thou hast the more answers to come: for as wicked men *treasure up wrath*, so doe godly men mercy, and especially by their prayers; & therefore mercies, and answers do often come thick together, even as afflictions also doe.

2

Suppose thou shouldst have few answers concerning the things thou seekest for here, either in
praying

praying for thy selfe or others, yet *thy reward is with the Lord.* It is in praying as in preaching, a man may preach faithfully many a yeere, and yet not convert a soule, and yet a man is not to give over waiting, but to observe after every Sermon what good is done, and whether God will give men repentance, as it is, *2 Tim. 2: 25.* And if none be converted, yet as *Esay 49. 4.* *A mans reward is with the Lord. Every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. 1 Cor. 3. 8.* and not according to the successe of his labour only. So it is in praying, though thou missest a-
gaine

Chap. 10

gain and again, & nothing succeeds thou prayest for, yet be not discouraged, for thy reward is with the Lord, which will come in one day.

3

3. God doth it, not that hee heares thee not, but to try thee; for a man to say as *David* sayes, *Psal. 116. 1, 2. God hath heard my prayer, therefore I will call upon him as long as I live,* that is nothing so much as to be able to say, *Well, I have prayed thus long, and for these many things, and never sped, and yet I will call upon him whilst I live, though I find no answer in this life. To finde commings in, in a trade, and yet to hold out trading.*

trading still, argues not so much faithfulness in a mans calling, as when a man hath losses, and castings behind hand, and yet to follow it.

4

4. God usually stayes so long that we have done expecting, *Luke 18.8. The Elect cry day and night, but God stayes so long, ver. 7.* that when he comes *hee findes not faith*, they have done expecting, have forgot their prayers, and then *hee doth things, they looked not for.*

Iſai. 64.

Other discouragements there are wherein we our selves are more faulty, and which are our sins, more then our temptations, which yet weaken the expectation.

§ 2.

A 2. cause, are sinfull discouragements, which are three.

Chap. 10

I
Slothful-
nesse in
prayer.

pectation of having our
prayers answered: as,

I Slothfulnesse in pray-
er, when wee doe not put
to all our might in pray-
ing, and then no wonder,
wee doe not onely not ob-
taine, but that our owne
hearts misgive us, that we
look for little successe and
issue of such prayers, *Qui*
frigide rogat, docet negare;
he that shews himself cold
in a suite, teaches him he
sues to to deny him; if
wee see one seeking to us
faintly, and slightly, wee
are not then sollicitous to
deny him, but thinke hee
will be easily put off, and
not thinke much; so ac-
cordingly when wee shall
observe so much by our
selves,

selves, and see our selves
slothfull in praying, and
praying *as if we prayed not*,
no wonder if by reason of
that consciounesse, wee
looke not after the suc-
cesse of such prayers,
which in the performance
wee slighted; when wee
pray, as if wee were wil-
ling to bee denyed, wee
knowing that the Scrip-
ture sayes, *that the fervent
prayer onely prevayles*, that
prayer which is *ἐν πίστει*,
that sets all the faculties
on worke, *James 5. 16.*
How should wee then ex-
pect that God should
grant any good thing to
us? For though God sels
nothing to us for our
prayers, but gives freely,
yet

Chap. 10

yet hee would have his gifts accepted: now without large desires, and longings they would not be accepted: and what is fervent prayer, but the expression of such fervent desires? *Jacob wrestled* when he obtained: *many seeke to enter*, sayes Christ, *but you must strive*. Now when wee know these things, and yet are slothfull, how can wee expect any answers at all? will not the conscioufnesse of it quell all our expectations? and hence it comes to passe that God proportioning his dealings with us to our prayers, because we seeme to pray, and yet pray not to purpose, therefore

therefore God hee sometimes seemes like one asleepe, and then sometimes to wake, and make faire offers to helpe, and yet falls as it were asleepe againe, because we were thus drowfie in our prayers; those prayers that awaken God, must awaken us: Those prayers that stir God, must first *stirre us to lay hold on God* as *Isaiah* speakes: as obedience strengthens *faith* and assurance, so fervency in prayer begets confidence of being heard. In all other things slothfulnesse doth discourage and weaken expectation: doth any man expect that riches should come upon him
when

Chap. 10

when hee doth his busi-
nesse negligently? *for it*
is the diligent hand that ma-
keth rich: doth any man
expect a crop and a har-
vest, if hee takes not pains
to plow, and sowe his
Corne? no more if you
doe not take paines with
your hearts in Prayer, can
you expect an answer, or
indeed will you.

1 Discou-
ragement:
looking at
prayer as a
duty rather
then as a
meanes to
obtaine
blessings.

2 Cause: or sinfull
discouragement herein,
is looking at *prayer* onely
as a duty to be performed,
and so performing it as a
taske, and not so much
out of desires stirred up
after the things to be ob-
tained, nor out of faith
that we shall obtain them;
which is as if a *Physician*
having

having a sick servant, to whom he prescribeth, and commandeth to take some physicke to cure him, and his man should take it indeed because it is commanded and prescribed by his master, looking at it as an act of duty as hee obeyes him in other businesses, but not as looking at it as a medicine, or meanes, that will have any worke upon him to cure him, and therefore orders himselfe as if hee had taken no such thing. Thus doe most in the world *pray* to God, take *prayer* as a *prescription* onely, but not as a *meanes*: they come to God daily, but as to a *Master* onely in this

Chap. 10

this performance, not as to a *Father*, and thus doing, no wonder if they looke for little effect of *prayers*: for our expectation never exceeds or reaches further then our end and intention, which we had in any businesse. If I perform any Ordinance, but as a duty, then I rest therein, and expect no further: as if a man preacheth for *filthy lucre* onely, he performs his duty and then lookes for his hire, but lookes not after any other effect of his Sermons: so nor will men doe after their *prayers* for answers to them when they performe them as duties onely. Now to help

Chap. 10

A directiō.

Two
things to
be lookt at
in praying.
A cōmand.
A promise.

help you in this, you are
to looke to two things in
prayer. First to a *command*
from God. Secondly to
the *promise of God*: and
so to consider it in a dou-
ble relation, first as a *duty*,
in respect to the *Command*,
secondly as a *means* to ob-
taine or procure blessings
at Gods hand in relation
to his *promise*: therefore
in prayer, first an *act of obe-*
dience, secondly an *act of*
faith is to bee exercised,
aske in faith nothing waver-
ing, Iam. 1. Now the most
in the world performe it
as an act of obedience on-
ly, and so rest in the pre-
sent performance and ac-
cepration of it, but if a
man *pray in faith*, hee will
pray

Chap. 10

pray with an eye to the promises; and looke on *prayer* as a meanes for time to come to obtaine such or such a mercy at Gods hands; and if so, then he is not satisfied till hee hath an answer of his *prayers*, and till then will wait, as the *Church* sayes, *Shee would wait till hee did arise and plead her cause.*

3 Discouragement; falling into sins againe after praying.

A third sinfull discouragement is returning to sinnes after *prayers*, when a man hath *prayed* for some mercy, and riseth full of much confidence that his *prayers* are heard, and so a while he walkes, yet falling into a sin, *that* sin doth dash al his hopes, undoes his *prayers*, (as he thinks)

thinkes) and calls them
backe againe, meetes as it
were with the answer,
which is Gods messenger,
and causeth it to returne
to heaven againe. How
often when God had even
granted a petition, and
the decree was a com-
ming forth, and the grant
newly written, and the
seale a setting to it, but
an act of treason com-
ming betweene, stops it
in the seale, and deferres
it, blots and blurreth all,
both prayer and grant
when newly written, and
leaves a guilt in the mind,
which quells our hopes,
and then wee looke no
more after our *prayers*; and
this especially if when we

M were

Chap. 10

were a sinning, such a thought came in, (as often it doth to restrain us) are you not in dependance upon God for such a mercy, and have prayed for it, and are faire for it, how then dare you doe this, and sin against him? when in this case the heart goes on, this blots all the *prayer*, and discourageth a man; for saith the conscience, will God hear *sinners*? (as he said.) And thus farre it is true that *sinning* thus between, interrupts and hinders the obtaining our petitions, that answerably as wee doe thus dash and betray and undoe our *prayers*, so in a proportion, we finde in

The answer to it.

in the way to our obtaining the thing wee *prayed* for, so many rubbes and difficulties doe arise; for as wee lay blocks in Gods way coming towards us to doe us good, so hee in ours: therefore often when a businesse goes prosperously on, and wee think wee shall carry it, comes some accident betweene the cup and the lip, that casts all behinde hand againe, because answerably wee dealt with God. For when wee had *prayed*, and were encouraged and in good hopes, then by some *sinne* or other wee spoyld all, and bereaved our selves of our expectation. But yet this

Chap. 10

you are to consider, that as in the end *praying* useth to overcome *sin* in Gods Children, so also God in the end overcomes difficulties, and brings the matter to passe: and know it is not *sins* past so much that hinder the prayers of Gods people, as the present unfitnessse and indisposition of their hearts for mercy.


TIDINGS



TIDINGS OF PEACE TO BEE SPOKEN to Consciences distressed.

Psal. 85. ver. 8.

— *God will speak peace un-
to his people, and to his
Saints, &c.* —

 **H**E maine thing
intended to bee
insisted upon out
of these words is dis-
patcht, yet that I may
not leave so faire and
fruitfull a crop still stand-
ing upon the ground un-
reaped, I will goe on
more briely to have in
the rest of that harvest

the Text affords.

This *Psalm* (as was said) was penned as a Prophecy of and prayer for the returne of Gods people out of the Captivity of *Babylon*, and the setting and establishment of that Church and State upon its former Basis, yet so as therein there is a further and more especiall aime had to the peace and glory to bee brought in by Christ, till when this Prophecy otherwise had but a poore and slender accomplishment, in regard of much outward glory or peace that that Church enjoyed.

And therefore the peace here spoken of and promised

promised for the present is to be extended largelier then to outward prosperity, or an happy issue out of that calamity, even to speaking peace to drooping and weather-beaten consciences: and accordingly we finde this kinde of peace to have beene specially promised by the Prophet *Isaiah* to the people at their returne out of the Captivity, both in *Isaiah* 48. from 20. to the end, and *Isaiah* the 57. from the 14. to the end, there being many broken hearts that had wanted the light of Gods countenance long, having beene during the Captivity, banisht from the Ordinances

ces of the Temple, hanging up their *harps* mourning, whose *thoughts* were as if God had meant to *destroy them*, as appears *Ier.29.11.* who afterwards were refreshed with inward *peace*, at the restoration of those Ordinances, as well as with outward, as by those places doth appeare. Therefore in relation to this kind of peace onely I will at this time handle the words.

In the words you have a discovery of Gods proceedings in treating of peace or proclaiming war with his people and subjects.

Obfer.1.

1. You see that sometimes

*times God doth not speake
peace to his owne children.*
This was their state for
the present, when this
Psalm was penned: *Hee*
will speake peace, therefore
at present he did not; yea,
it may incline us to think
that God at present spake
the contrary, for the Pro-
phet speaks this by *faith*,
as contrary to sense, and
present experience; hee
beleeves God intends to
come againe to a treaty
of peace, though now hee
seemes to have nothing
but anger, and blood, and
war in his looks, speeches,
and actions; and to threa-
ten and proclaime warre,
and take up Armes against
them. And thus God of-

ren deales with his owne
 Children, whether a peo-
 ple or a particular man:
 so with a nation, *Esay 63.*
10. They rebelled, and hee
fought against them: so
 with a particular man,
 God frowned upon and
 rated his Child *Ephraim,*
and spake bitter things a-
gainst him, (it is the phrase
 used, *Ier. 31. 20.*) though
 yet *Ephraim* is my pleasant
 Child sayes he: *David* had
 not a good word from
 him a long time, *Psal. 51. 8.*
Make me to heare againe
of joy and gladnesse. And
Psal. 50 7. Heare ab my peo-
ple, and I will speake, but
 not against them they
 might hope, because hee
 owne them for his peo-
 ple:

ple: Heare oh Israel, and I will testifie against thee: and yet it followes, *I am the Lord thy God.* Iob sayes, he did not speake onely against him, but also wrote bitter things, hee wrote as it were bookes against him, Iob 13. 26. hee writing over in his Conscience the sinnes of his youth in letters of blood and wrath and terrors for them.

There must needs be some great reason for this *they being his people*, which is the second thing that is intimated, and may be observed out of these words, namely, the reason, or moving cause provoking God thus to interrupt

Obfer. 2.

rupt the peace of his people : they had fallen into some grosse *folly* or other, some sinfull inordinate dispositions had beene indulged unto, and nourished in them, which is usually, though not alwayes, the cause of this his dealing : this is evident by this, that the conclusion of their peace, when it is made up againe hath this clause, as the onely article of reconciliation between them, that *they returne no more to folly*, implying they had formerly runne out into some inordinacy, which to reduce them from, God had tooke up armes against them, and thereby taught them wisdom

dome to take heed of losing, and then buying peace at so deare a rate againe. And indeed all the quarrells, that God hath against a Nation, a particular place, or person, that belongs to him, doe begin there; *They rebelled, and Hee fought against them, Esay 63. 8. For the iniquity of his covetousnesse I was wroth, Iſa 57.*

The reason is, for anger is out of love as well as hatred, which therefore he expresseth though with griefe, hee should be put to quarrell with those, hee hath set himsele to loue. And as wicked men, whom hee alwaies hates, may out of his patience have

Reason.

have a truce ; so on the contrary, with his owne, God may take up a quarrell, yet He loves them, & remembers them with everlasting kindnesse.

The *Vses* of both are these.

Vse 1.

I As peace with God is deare to you, so to take heed of turning unto folly. Onely take this advertisement, that they are not meere follies or ignorances that doe interrupt or breake the peace : as it is not simply the outrage of some Pirats that will cause two States at peace to enter into a warre, unlesse that State consent to their act, and maintaine them in their rapine. So it is

is not simply the rising of lusts that warre in our members against the Law of the minde, that breake the peace betweene God and us, unlesse they be approved of, and consented unto, nourished and maintained with some presumption; whilst wee maintaine, and take up a constant fight against Gods enemies in us, and disavow the outrageous risings of our lusts, the peace may hold and often doth; for whilst wee are not at peace with sin, God maybe at peace with us and our Spirits; but so much peace as wee give them, so much warre God takes up.

The

Vse 2.

The second *Vse* is: Doth God take up quarrells against His owne? then upon any breach made, goe forth to meet Him: It is *Saint Pauls* exhortation, not to let the *Sunne* goe downe upon thy wrath, but to reconcile thy selfe ere night, with thy offended brother; but I turne the exhortation, Let not the *Sunne* goe downe upon Gods wrath towards thee; but every day make and renew thy peace with God, ere thou sleepest, that as *David* sayes, thou mayest lie downe and sleepe in peace, *Psal. 4. 8.*

Vse 3.

The third *Vse*: If the peace of Gods owne people be thus often interrupted

rupted, who yet are *the*
Sons of peace: Luk. 10. what
 wrath is reserved for the
children of disobedience,
 and open Rebels? that
 are *children of wrath,* be-
 cause of *disobedience.* There
 is no peace to the wicked,
 sayes my God, *Esa. 57.* God
 is a preparing against thee,
 who ever thou art, that
 goest on in *sinne,* if thou
 turne not, *Psal. 7. 13.* thou
 art prest for hell, and art
 thither bound, to encoun-
 ter with the wrath of the
 great God, thither where
 no truce is to bee had,
 there is no discharge in that
 warre, as Solomon sayes,
Eccles. 8. 8. Think of this,
 you that *sinne,* and will
sinne; whose peace is not
 struck

Ephes. 2. 2.

struck up betweene God and you, who never yet so much as entred into any treaty of peace with God, who never apprehended God and your selves at oddes.

Obfer. 3.

The third thing to be observed out of the Text is this; *That when the Child of God wants peace, he can have no peace till God speak it; God must speak peace, if ever his people have it: therefore sayes hee here, I will heare what God will speake: he speaks in opposition to the voice of man, and the helpe of second causes, and of all meanes whatever, which in time of distresse, of themselves can doe no good.*

Rea-

Reason first : Because God is the King of all the world, the Sovereigne Lord of all. Now treaties of war and peace are the prerogative of Kings, and of them alone : they may consult with their subjects about establishing good Lawes, as they use to doe, &c. but the proclaiming Warre and Peace with forreigne States, they have ever held in their owne hands ; and so doth God who is the King of Kings.

Reas. 1.

Secondly, because God is the Judge of all the world and the party offended, at whose suite all arrests and controversies doe come ; now when a
con-

Reas. 2.

condemned man stands at the barre, let all the standers by say what they will, bid him be of good comfort, and tell him that his cause will goe well, yet till hee heare the Judge himselfe speake as much, he cannot be at rest in his minde: the Judge onely can acquit him and absolve him. The King alone speakes pardons; and so doth God peace; all afflictions are his arrests; thou must therefore make thy peace with him, if thou wilt be at peace.

Reis. 3.

Thirdly, peace especially of conscience, is a thing must be *created*, for our hearts of themselves are full of nothing but *turmoile*;

moile; as the raging sea,
which cannot rest. I create
the fruit of the lips, peace.
Isaiah 57. 19. men may
speake it, but I must cre-
ate it; A word of power,
such as went forth when
light was created, must
goe forth from God, or
else there is no peace;
for otherwise our hearts
are as the sea, that rests
not.

Fourthly, the wounds
of conscience which are
in Gods people, are of
that quality, that none but
God can cure them; for,
the chiefe thing that
wounds them, is the losse
of Gods favour, not simply
his wrath: for it is the
glory of God, and his fa-
vour,

Reas. 4.

your, not selfe-love onely
that makes them seeke
him; therefore nothing
gives peace, but the resto-
ring of his favour, and the
light of his countenance;
the same dart that wound-
ed, must heale againe;
*Isay 57. I smote him, and I
will heale him:* And as one
that is sick with love, whe
love is the disease, no phy-
sick, no perswasion of
friends can cure it, no-
thing but onely the love
of the party beloved; so
when a soule is wounded
for the losse of Gods love,
not all the things in the
world can cure the heart,
but one word from him,
one good looke, one pro-
mise from him that wee
are

are his, stills all, and onely can give peace. Like to a poore child, that cryes for its mother, let who will dandle it, and play with it, and use it never so kindly, yet it will not be stilled till the mother comes; so it is with a poore soule that cryes after God day and night.

I Vse. In case thou art in distresse, especially of spirit, and want of peace of Conscience, waite upon G O D, in the use of meanes for peace; friends may come to thee, and say, Why shouldest thou be troubled? thou hast no such cause to bee cast downe; but all these are miserable comforters, (as
106

Vse I.

Job said) unlesse God speak peace : *David* heard by the Prophet *Nathan* that his sinne was pardoned, but yet his soule was not at quiet, til God would second it immediately by his Spirit ; therefore sayes he, when *Nathan* had been with him, *Psal.* 51.8. *Make me to beare of joy and gladnesse.* Art thou baited with hellish blasphemies cast into thy soule ? God must speake peace, and rebuke Satan for thee, and take him off thee ; all thy friends, all the men in the world cannot doe it ; they can only say as the Archangell said, *The Lord rebuke thee.* And hee can as easily doe it, as he did re-
buke

buke *Luban*, and forbade him speaking roughly to *Jacob*, the same charge hee can give in an instant to *Satan*; therefore wait up. on God, and looke up to him.

2 Consider this against the time you come to die; all your desire is to die in peace, and, *Oh let thy servant depart in peace!* is the speech and desire of all; But who is it, that must speake peace to you then? God onely. At death you will send for a good Minister, or a good friend, to give you some comfort, (as you call it) but, if God will not speake it, how can they? if you could call all the Angels out of

Vse 2.

N

Hea-

Heaven, and all the Saints both in earth, and Heaven; and so could have all that whole Colledge of Physicians about you, and they should desire to comfort you with all their cordials; yet if God will not speake it, who is able to doe it? *Iob 34. 29. If he hides his face, who can behold him?* None can shew his face, as the opposition in the next words shewes. False daubers may come to you, & say, *Peace, peace*, as they in the Prophet said; but listen what God will speak, he onely must, and can doe it, and be sure you make sure of him before you come to die. Would any wise Prince
desert

deferr the treaty of peace with his enemy, till hee come into the field, and when the battel is begun? how foolish then are those, who neglect seeking after God, till the assault of death comes, and the *King of feares* with all his terrours, hath encompassed them round?

4. *Observation* is, that let Gods people be in never so great distresse, yet *it is an easie thing for God to give peace to them*; mark the expression used here, It is but *speaking peace*, that is, it is as *easie* for him to give peace, as it is for you to *speake a word*; it is no more to him: Then, our comfort is, that as he one-

Obser. 4.

ly must doe it; so he easily can doe it, even with a word.

Reas. I.

Reason I. Because his speaking is *creating*: if he speaks, he makes things to be, even with a word; as at first, he did but say, *Let there be light, and there was light*; so still, if he but say, *Let there bee peace*, there is peace: hee made all, and upholds all by the word of his power. As therefore when the storme was at its height, and the waves most raging, yet at one word of *Christ*, they were all still: *The sea and the winds obey him*: so, when tentations are most fierce, and the doubts of thine owne heart most tumultuous,

tuous, and raging, a word from him, can still them.

Secondly, because the light, which God gives to a mans spirit, when hee speaks peace, is a sure and infallible light, and therefore a satisfying light; so as when it comes, it must needs give peace; and no objection, no tentation can darken or obscure it, when it shines: *If he give quietnesse, who can trouble?* sayes he in *Iob 34.29*. No creature is able to separate from his love, or the assurance of it.

Reas. 2.

1 It is a certaine and infallible light, which God gives, when hee speaks peace; The *anointing from above*, which enlighteneth

a mans eyes, is truth, and is no lie, 1. Iob. 2. 27. that is, in teaching a man (of which hee there speakes, not onely what hee is in himselfe, but what hee is in teaching us) he doth it so, as a man is not deluded by it, and therefore it is added, *None else need teach him*; for did the spirit, (whē he did speak peace) speak so, as that that man to whom it is spoken, did not infallibly apprehend it, hee should speake in vaine: for so the Apostle reasons in case of *unknown tongues*, that if a trumpet give an *uncertaine sound*; or a man speakes so, as it shall not be knowne what hee speakes, *hee beats the*

aire:

aire : 1. Cor. 14.9. Now therefore surely God, when hee speakes peace, speakes it so infallibly, and distinctly, that the soule knows the meaning of it; It is not a voice else; for, sayes the Apostle there, ver. 10. *The end of all voices is to signifie*, and therefore if I know not the meaning of the voice, bee shall be as a Barbarian, that speakes to me: ver. 11. especially when the speaker undertakes to bee a witnesse, as the Holy Ghost in speaking peace is, 1. Iohn 5.6. Now to witnesse, is such a testimony, as is taken for infallible, for the end of it is to put an end to the controversie, and it

ends the strife betweene man and man ; now the Holy Ghost when hee speakes, speakes as a *witnesse*, and therefore puts an end to a mans doubts ; he speakes infallibly.

And therefore in the second place, it is a satisfying light also ; it is such a light, as dispells darknesse, as answers all objections ; and so speakes peace home. As in a question, and Controversie in Divinity, or Logicke, when some one bottome truth is understood, a man hath a light, which goes through all the Objections, and answers them all, such a light doth the Spirit give to a poore distressed

stressed soule, about the great controversie of his owne salvation, when hee doth speake peace; hee gives such a light, as satisfies the minde, as lets him see *that* in Gods free grace, and in Christ, which doth answer to all, hee, or all the devills can say against him, from what wants, or objections are in himselfe. *Hee openeth, and no man, nor devill, is able to shut:* And therefore when he doth speake peace, his testimony is taken and belceved: If wee receive the witnessse of men, and rest in it: 1. Iohn 5. 9. *The witnessse of God is greater, that is, of more power, and efficacie to per-*

N 5 swade,

Use I.

swade, and satisfie the soule.

I. Use, is an Use of comfort to poore soules, that are in distresse, and in such distresse sometimes, as they thinke, and say their case is desperate, and past recovery, so farre are their soules sometimes shot into despaire. Consider, how easie it is for you to have your condition altered, and changed, even in a moment. I tell thee, though (it may be) thou hast been cast down this twenty yeeres, and thy soule is battered, broken, hardened, settled, fixed in serious thoughts of thy ruine, and reprobation, yet one good looke,

one

one good word from God shall in an instant dispell all, alter thy conceit and apprehension cleane; God can and doth often more with one word, in one moment, then Satan could doe in many yeeres, with all the objections he could muster up. The truth of this, in experience wee often finde and observe in our selves and others. Yea, and sometimes when hee doth speake peace, hee gives such satisfaction to a mans soule in that particular, that hee would bee content to bee as many yeeres more, in his spirituall conflicts, to enjoy but the like light, one halfe houre. Thus easie
is

is it, for God to speake peace. Though thou thinkest thy selfe never so far off from peace, yet he can speake peace to them, that are as farre off, as well as those who are neere: as himselfe sayes, *Esay 57. 19.* for, sayes hee, it is I that speake it. And when hee doth it, then all thy doubts and distresses, will bee forgotten, as the paines of a woman in travaile are when a man-child is borne.

Vse 2.

Secondly, is the Church in any distresse? (as the Church here at this time was,) hee can redeeme it out of all with a word. A word spoken to *Cyrus* his heart, did set them in their

their owne land againe,
so you have it exprested,
Esay 44. 26, 27, 28. The
God that saith to Ierusalem,
thou shalt bee inhabited, and
to the Cities of Iudah, yee
shall bee built; you see his
maner of doing it, it is but
with a word speaking; *he*
sayes to Ierusalem, be built; and
though there be neuer so
great impediments in the
way, he will *say to the deep,*
bee dry, that his people
may passe over; hee dry-
ed up a whole Nation, a
sea of people, namely the
Babylonians, to make way
for this deliverance. And
when they are conquered,
and *Cyrus,* a new King
comes to have the sway
of things, God speakes to
his

his heart also; *That saith of Cyrus, he is my shepheard,* and causeth him to say to Jerusalem, Be thou built. Therefore goe to him, and trust in him in all the distresses of the Church, as the Church also did, *Psal. 44. 4. Thou art my king, command deliverances;* A *Mandamus* from God doth it, and will doe it at any time.

Obfer. 5.

Let God bee never so angry, and his peoples distresse never so great, yet he will speak peace in the end to his people: you heard before, that if wee have peace, he onely must give it; and then, that hee could, and was able with ease to doe it: and now you

you shall heare, that hee
will certainly doe it in
the end.

The *Reasons* the Text
suggests are these :

Reas. 1.

1. If wee consider but,
who this God is, that is
to speake peace, *I will*
heare what God the Lord
will speake; he is *the Lord*,
and therfore able to speak
what pleaseth him; he is
peculiarly *the God of peace*,
and therefore willing to
speake peace. Now, 1.
when it is said, hee is the
God of peace, and the God of
comfort, the meaning is,
hee is full of it, infinitely
full of it, and out of *the*
abundance of the heart, the
mouth speakes; thoughts of
peace, and love to his,
doe

doe boile within him, as hatred, or malice doth in a malicious man towards his enemy; so as hee cannot containe and forbear expressing it towards him; that as *David* sayes, his *thoughts did burne within him*, and at last, *brake forth*; so in God, *I know the thoughts I thinke towards you* (saies hee to them of the captivity) *Ier. 29. 11.* *They are thoughts of peace, and not of evill.* And 2. besides that these his thoughts of peace are taken up of himselfe, his Son also hath bespoken peace for us; and therefore God will speake it, Even as *Ioseph*, though he spake roughly a while to his

his brethren, yet could
not in the end containe,
Gen. 45.1. so nor God.

Secondly, Let us consider, who they are to whom hee is to speake it, they are *his people*, as the text hath it; and to them there is no question, but hee will speake peace; though hee seemes angry for a while. They are his people, that is the reason given, *1. Sam. 12.22.* *Hee will not cast off his people:* as also *Esay 63.8,9.* *When they rebelled, he was wroth, yet hee said, surely, they are my people, so I was their Saviour.* They? why they are the *sonnes of peace*, *Luke 10.6.* ordained for peace, and therefore shall
bee

Reas. 2.

be sure to have it ; and although some differences may arise betwixt God and them, yet there is a naturall ~~symp~~ in the Lord, that moves him to speake peace in the end to them : as the dumbe sonne of *Cræsus*, when hee saw his father like to bee killed, though hee had never spake before, yet then out of an *impetus* of spirit, the strings of his tongue were unloosed, and hee cried out to the murtherer, *Kill not King Cræsus* ; so, when the enemies of his Church are ready to devoure his people, and *Satan* is ready to swallow his child up in despaire, then Gods bowells worke within him,

him, and hee can hold no longer, but cries, *save my child, save my Church. Is Ephraim my pleasant child,* (sayes God) *Ier. 31. 20?* Well sayes God, *though I spake against him, and took him up, and chid him soundly, yet I cannot forget my child sayes he, nor my Fatherly affection to him, but my bowels are stirred, and I will surely have mercy on him.*

Thirdly, otherwise if *Reas. 3.* God did not in the end speake peace, they would indeed *returne to follie*, which is the third thing in the text. For his end of speaking peace, is that they might not returne to folly, *Psal. 125. 3. The rod of*

of the wicked shall not al-
ways lie upon the righteous,
least they put forth their
hand to iniquity, Therefore
at the last verse, Peace shall
be upon Israel. As for this
cause he speakes outward
peace, so also inward, and
suffers not the rod of Sa-
tan, and of his owne hea-
vie displeasure to lie up-
on their hearts: for else
they would returne to
the pleasures of sinne; for
every creature must have
some delight; their spi-
rits would faile, and be ti-
red out else, and wearied
in good duties, if GOD
should not in the end
speake peace, *Esay 57.*
*The spirit would faile be-
fore me.* When the childe
swounds

(wounds in the whipping,
God lets fall the rod, and
falls a kissing it, to fetch
life into it againe. As tis a
rule in Physicke, still to
maintaine nature: and
therefore when that shall
bee in hazzard to bee de-
stroyed, they leave giving
purging Physicke, and
give cordials: so doth
G O D with his people,
though with purging
physicke, he often brings
their spirits very weake,
and low, yet hee will up-
hold and maintaine their
spirits, so as they shall not
faile, and bee extinguisht,
but then he will give car-
dials: to raise them up
againe.

Vse 3. What good heart
that

that beares a child-like affection to God, would offend such a God, that beethy distresses what they will bee, will certainly speake peace: then doe not put him to it, spend not upon that precious stock of his free grace and love. Tis true, *he is married to thee*, and therefore *though thou hast gone a whoring after many lovers*, *Ier. 3. 1, 2, 14.* still hee sayes, *Returne, for I am married to thee*: as therefore when man and wife are fallen out, they consider, wee must live together, and therefore they reconcile themselves againe: so consider it must bee betweene God and thee, and
make

make it a meanes and motive to recover thee, as *Samuel* did to the *Israe-*
lites: *1. Sam. 12.22.* You
have committed this great
sinne, yet turn not aside from
following the Lord, for God
will not cast you off, you are
his people. Goe home to
 him againe, he will speak
 peace. Thinke thus, the
 time will come wherein
 God will be friends again
 with me, he and I cannot
 be strange long; though
 I would, he will not, *Esay*
57. 18, 19. though he went
 on stubbornly, yet God
 healed him, and would
 not lose his childe, there-
 fore I will returne of my
 selfe.


THE



THE
FOLLY OF
RELAPSING
after Peace spoken.

Pfal. 85. ver. 8.

— But let them turne no
more to folly.

 HE sixth Obser-
vation is, That
Peace being spoken
to their hearts by G O D,
they should retorne no more
to folly. See this EZra 9. 13,
14. Thou having punished
us lesse then wee deserve,
O and

Obfer. 6.

and given us such a deliverance as this, should wee againe breake thy Commandements, wouldst thou not be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us?

Reas. 1.

I Reason: Because it will be a greater aggravation in sinning; It is made the aggravation of Solomons sinne, 1 Kings 11.9. That God had appeared to him twice: they were especiall appearances and manifestations of mercy; and though such doe now cease, yet wee reade of such as are analogicall to them, as Iohn 14. 21. Christ promiseth to manifest himselfe, which is by shedding abroad his love, and his Fathers love into

into the heart, which is evident by the former words, *he shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him,* and after he saith, *wee will come to him, and make our abode with him, ver. 23. and 27. My peace I will give unto you.* Now such appearances will be set upon the score of every sin, many yeares after, as they were upon *Solomons*. And the reason is, because nothing wounds an ingenuous loving Nature more, then matter of unkindnesse: if it had beene my enemy sayes *David*, I could have borne it, *Psal. 55. 12, 14.* but it was thou *oh man*, mine acquaintance, we tooke sweet counsell together, a bosome
O 2 friend

friend to whom I had committed my secrets, opened my heart : Thus when God hath unbo-
somed himselfe as it were to a man, and told him what was in his heart to-
wards him, this goes nigh him, if hee lifts up the heele against him. And the reason of that further also is, ' because of all things else, a man cannot endure to have his love abused, you come nigh him when you doe so, for his love is himselfe, and commands all in him, so that abuse his love, and you strike at his heart ; it is lesse to abuse any excellency in a man, to reproach and extenuate his parts,

parts, learning, &c. though these are deare to him, but his love is his bowels. And therefore, when God hath opened his heart to a man, and set his love upon him, and revealed it to him, and hee carries himselfe unworthily, *it paines him at the heart.* Besides, it is against the law of Nature and of Nations, to seeke out for a peace, and get it concluded, and then secretly to prepare for, and enter into a war; nothing more hatefull, or can exasperate two Nations one against another more then this. It was the aggravation of *Abshaloms sin*, that being newly reconciled with his father,

and taken into favour againe, after two yeeres discountenance, hee then began to rebell more closely.

Reas. 2.

2 Reason is intimated in the word *folly*, as if the Lord should have said, Set aside the unkindnesse and wrong you doe to me, yet therein you befoole yourselves; you will have the worst of it. And indeed, when God doth afterwards draw nigh to a man againe, upon that his recovery of his peace, it appears to be folly, even in that mans owne apprehension; when hee hath tasted how sweet God is, then come and aske him, What, will ye returne to
fin

sin againe? hee will then say, Aske mee if I will wound or cut my flesh: It is impossible, thinkes he, I should any more be so besotted; if there were no other motives, hee thinkes it the greatest folly in the world. And therefore G O D on purpose chooseth out that expression, and placeth it here in this case, because it is indeed the greatest folly in Gods sight; and is so apprehended by our selves, looking upon *sinne* after peace is spoken to us. It is folly to *sin* against G O D at any time, but especially then, and that will appeare by these particulars.

I. Because, before a man had that peace, hee felt the bitterneſſe of ſin, for G O D never ſpeakes peace, till that bee felt: now that is an argument even to ſenſe, never to returne to it againe; which a foole will be warned by; *A burnt Child dreads the fire*; even as a Child will take heed being taught by ſenſe. When a man ſhall be in great diſtreſſe, and his Conſcience ſhall ſuggeſt to him, as *Ier. 4. 18.* *Thy wayes and thy doings have procured theſe things to thee, this is thy wickedneſſe:* a ſpeech like that when you ſay to your Children, when they have gotten any harme or cold, or ſickneſſe,

nesse, this is *your playing* and gadding and going in the Snow, and your eating of fruit, &c. so doth GOD speake there, to them when they were in distresse, this is *your wickednesse*, for it is bitter, it reacheth to the heart, it woundeth the Conscience, the wounding of which, of all else is the greatest misery. When once a man after this hath peace restored to him, and hee comes newly out of such a distresse, aske him then how he likes turning to such a *sin* againe, and he will tell you, it is the greatest folly in the world: aske *David* if hee will murther any more after

his bones have been broken, and set againe.

2 Thou wilt easily acknowledge, it is folly to return to *sin* again, if thou considerest the terms, upon which thou didst obtaine thy peace. Reckon what paines it cost thee, to wash out the guilt and staine, which sinne had made, what vows and resolutions thou madest, what bonds thou didst seale unto, what promises never to returne, what prayers and teares, what rappes and knocks at Heaven Gates, ere thou couldest get an answer, or *God* to speake one word, he making as if hee had not beene within: why is it

it not folly now to lose
that in an instant, thou
hast bene a getting so
long, haply many yeares,
and with so much paines
and cost? You use it as an
excuse to prodigalls to
say, things lightly come
by, are lightly gone; and
yet you count them, and
call them fooles for it, as
not knowing what it is to
earne a penny: how much
more folly is it, when a
man having afore morga-
ged his peace, and God re-
stored it again after much
suite, and waiting many a
term, then to come home,
and venture to cast all a-
way at one throw at dice?
such a fool art thou, when
thou returnest to sinne; to
drinke

drink that at one draught,
 which thou hast been get-
 ting many a yeare, what
 madnesse is it? when thou
 hast taken much paines,
 to wash thy selfe, then to
 wallow in the mire again,
 and make thy selfe new
 worke, what folly is it?
 who but Children and
 fooles will doe thus?
 That which the Church
 said in another case, may
 well be alluded to in this,
*Cant. 5. 31. I have washed
 my feet, how shall I defile
 them?*

3 Consider, what it is
 thou dost hazard, to lose
 by returning to folly: *thy
 peace. David* lost it, as ap-
 pears, *Psal. 51. 12.* there-
 fore sayes he, *restore to me
 the*

*the joy of thy salvation ; In
losing of which, thou wilt
be so much a loser, that if
the sinne thou choosest.
were able to give thee all
the world, it could not re-
compence thee ; no not
the losse of one houres
communion with God,
which in a moment will
bring thee in more sweet-
nesse, than all thy sins can
doe, to eternity. If all the
pleasures of sin were con-
tracted, and the quintes-
sence of them strained in-
to one cup, they would
not afford so much, as one
drop of true peace with
God doth, being let fall
into the heart. It is peace
which passeth understand-
ing. Few pleasures here do
exceed*

exceed the senses, nay, the senses are capable of more than the things can give; but this passeth understanding. *Gods loving kinnesse is better than life.* If it were propounded to thee, thou must lose thy life next moment, if thou shouldst commit such a sinne, wouldest thou venture, if thou didst beleieve it? Now *The loving kinnesse of God is better than life*, and wilt thou lose the enjoying of it, though but for a moment?

4. It is folly to returne againe, because the pleasures of sin will be much lesse to thee after thou hast had peace spoken. Take them at the best, when

when they are freshest,
and when thy palate was
most in relish, and taste
with them, when thou
wert carnall, and ere thou
knewest what sweetnesse
was in God, and they then
were but poor sorry pleasures;
but now, they will
prove farre more empty
than before; they are
empty vaine pleasures e-
ven to him that hath the
in their flower, and in his
season of sinning; and
therefore all wicked men
are weary, and do inward-
ly complain of their con-
dition, onely they cannot
finde sweetnesse in God,
and so are faine to keepe
themselves to their husks;
but alas, to thee they are
farre

farre lesse worth than to another man, who knows not God, and therefore thou art like to have a worse bargaine of it; another man can make more money of a sinne, and get more pleasure out of it, than thou art able to doe.

For first, thy conscience having beene scorched with sinne, as scalt flesh deares more, and is more sensible in comming to the fire, than other parts of the body, is become of a quicker sense; whereas wicked mens is seared, and so they commit all uncleannesse with greedynesse; but thine is tender & galled in the act, which allayes

allayes much of the pleasure of thy sinne, and mingleth the more bitterneffe with it.

And 2. besides this galling of conscience, which is common to thee with many an unregenerate man, thou hast a principle of grace, an inner man, which is dead to such pleasures, that tastes them not, that is like *Barzillai*, who through age 2 *Sam.* 19. 35. could not taste either what he ate or drank, as young men doe; no more can that *New man* in thee, and therefore it can be but halfe as pleasant to thee as to another man. If one side of a man be taken all with a numbe palsey, what

what pleasure is it to that man, to exercise his limbs in the actions of life? He is but halfe a man, and lives but halfe a life; so it is with thee, when thou hast grace in thy heart, but halfe thy heart can take pleasure in sinning, that new man the other halfe, reluctates, grieves for it, hates what thou doest; and all this must needs strike off much of the pleasure.

But 3. If wee adde to this, that this new man in him having once tasted what sweetnes is in God, and *How good the Lord is*, is then like a man that hath eaten sweet-meats, other things are out of taste

taste with him, and therefore also it is folly to returne. No man (sayes Christ, *Luke 5 ult.*) having dranke old wine desireth new, for hee saith the old is better; a man used to high fare cannot agree so well with thinne dyet: so the soule having beene used to taste of great pleasures in God, the impression & remembrance of them leaves his soule lesse satisfied than another mans; a stomack that hath beene enlarged to full diet, looks for it, and riseth more hungry from a slender meale: now communion with God enlarges the faculties, and widens them and makes them more capable

pable of greater joyes, than other men have, and therefore the creature is lesse able to fill them; still he remembers with much griefe, whilest he is eating his huskes, what fare hee had in his fathers house: and oh, *Then it was better with me, than now.* Call me not *Naomi*, but call mee *Marah*, as she said, *For I went out full, and am come home empty*; so doth hee say, when he comes from the act of sinning, he went with his heart full of peace, and meeting with a bargaine of sinning, thought to eke out his joy, and make it fuller, but hee comes home empty.

I Use,

Vse I.

I Use, is to those who have had peace spoken to them, let them at such times feare themselves and God most, for then comes in this, as you see here, as the most seasonable admonition that can be given, to returne no more to folly. 1. Feare God then most : for of all times else, then sins provoke him most ; to come and call him *Father*, and *the guide of your mouth*, and yet to fall to sinne, this is to doe as evill as you can, you cannot doe worse. *Ier. 3. 4, 5. So EZra 9. After such an escaping, should we againe breake thy Commandements, wouldest thou not be angry till thou hadst consumed*

sumed us ? In times of affliction it is the property of a good childe to love G O D most : in times of speaking peace, to *fear* God most and his goodnesse, and to fear to offend him for his goodnesse sake. Did I onely say, that God is *provoked* most then, if you return to folly ? Nay, I adde further, he is *grieved*, which is more then to be provoked; and therefore you shall marke that expression and admonition not to *grieve Gods Spirit*, then comes in, when the *Spirit hath sealed us up to the day of redemption*, *Ephes. 4.30.* Then by sinning wee are said more properly to grieve him
then

then before, when hee hath so far ingaged himselfe to love a man, and expressed himself to him, and set his seale upon him for his. God is angry with wicked mens sins, but hee is grieved for yours. To grieve him is more then to anger him. Meere anger is an affection can ease it selfe by revenge, and by comming even againe with the party, and when wee can or intend to doe so, our mindes are not so much aggrieved, but please themselves rather to thinke of the revenge which wee meane to execute: so when wicked men sinne whom GOD meanes to meet with, hee
is

is said to be angry rather then grieved; and sayes, *I will ease my selfe of mine adversaries: Isay I. 24. and avenge my selfe of mine enemies.* But here, as when a mans wife that lies in his bosome, or his child shall wrong him: so is it when one sins, whom God hath set himselfe to love, and done much for, and made knowne his everlasting kindnesse unto, and sealed to the day of redemption: this goes to his heart, grieves him rather then angers him, and such are the truest and deepest griefes. What should hee doe with you in this case? if afflict you, and by that meanes goe about to turne

turne you from your iniquity, therein he shall but afflict himselfe as it were; for *Though they rebelled, yet when they were afflicted hee was afflicted, Esay 63.9, 10.* As when a Father that is a Magistrate, or as one that maintaines a Student in a Colledge, if either punisheth a childe, or pupill in his purse, he punisheth himselfe, so must God afflict himselfe to afflict you. Put not the Lord into these straits if you have any love in you. And 2. as thou art therefore to feare God most then, so thy selfe most, and to be more watchfull over thy own heart; thou art then apt to returne to
P folly,

folly, if thou takest not heed; as when a man hath beene very hot, or sweat much, hee is apt to take the greatest cold. *Hezekiah*, after GOD sealed peace to him and answered his prayers, and renewed the lease of his life, his heart got cold, he did returne to folly. The reason is, because then the heart is apt to grow lesse watchfull, and to thinke it selfe fortified enough against any tentation. As *S. Peter* having seene Christ transfigured in the Mount, grew confident in his own strength. And know that the Devill watcheth such an opportunity most, for hee gets a great victory if he

he can foile thee then, after hee hath beene foiled himselfe, and when thou art most triumphing over him; how many batrels have beene lost through security of victory and recoyling of the enemy? and besides our corrupt nature so farre as unrenewed, is apt to gather heart to it selfe, to slight sinne, as thinking its pardon easily gotten.

Therefore when thou art tempted, labour often to renew those thoughts, which thou hadst of thy sinne at that time, when thou wert suing for peace, before thy peace was gotten; when thou wouldest have given a world for

Gods favour ; & also what thoughts thou hadst of it, when God spake peace, how thou didst abhor it, yea, thy self, & look what sin was most bitter to thee & an enemy to thy peace; as if uncleannesse, Idlenes, neglect of prayer, ill company, &c. and preserve in thy heart those bitter apprehensions of it, & say of it, thou hast *bin a bloody sin to me*, as *Moses* wife said of her husband: and though I have got peace, & my life saved, yet it was a bloody sin to *Christ*, his blood was shed to purchase this my peace, & shal I return to it?

And when tempted to it again, have recourse to the kindnes God shewed thee

in pardoning, and say, how shall I do this, and sinne against God? say as he said, *Is this thy kindnesse to thy friend?* 2. Sam. 16. 16. and what, shall I *Absalom*-like, now I am new reconciled to my Father, fall a plotting treason again? what, shall I make more worke for prayer, more work for God, breake my bones again, & lie roaring again? Think thus, I was burnt in the hād afore, I shalbe racked surely now. *Sin no more lest a worse thing befall thee.*

Vse 3. The doctrine of assurance (if not abused) and of Gods speaking peace to men is no dangerous doctrin to make men secure and presumptuous

in sinning: when peace is preached in any mans heart, this use naturally flowes from that Doctrin, *returne no more to folly.* The very scope of the whole Epistle of S. Iohn is to help all beleevers to assurance, as appeares by the 1. Iohn 1. 4, 5. and the 5. Chap. 13. *These things I write to you, that yee might have communion with God, and that your joy might be full.* But this will open a way to all licentiousnesse. No sayes S. Iohn, Chap. 2. 1. *These things I write unto you that ye sin not;* nothing guards the heart more against tentations, then the peace of God: it is said to guard the heart, *Phil. 4. 2.* Yea and

and if you doe sin, the assurance of Gods love is the speediest way to recover you; so it followes: *If any one doth sinne, wee have an Advocate with the Father, &c. And bee that hath this hope in him, that is, to live with Christ, and knowes what manner of love the Father beares us, purifies himselfe as bee is pure, 1. Iohn 3. 1, 2, 3.* If there were no more but selfe-love in a man, it were then no wonder if he doth abuse it. For selfe-love, where the love of God is wanting, is unthankfull and ungratefull, willing to take all the love and kindnesse which is afforded, and abuse it, and work

upon it for its owne advantage; and it is true also that because wee have too much of this principle unmortified in us, therefore God trusteth so few with much assurance, because they would abuse it. But where true love to God is seated, and much of it implanted, there the love of God & the peace of God doth as kindly and naturally enkindle and enflame and set it awork, even as arguments suitable to selfe-love doe work upon, and stirre that principle. For grace is more for G O D then for our selves, it being the image of Gods holinesse, whose holinesse consists in this,
to

to aime at himselfe in all:
and therefore when Gods
free grace towards a man
is revealed, it raiseth him
up to higher straines of
love to God, and hatred
of sin. And therefore it is
observable, *Psa. 51. 12.* that
David when he prayes for
the restoring of the joy of his
salvation, hee prayes not
simply for it, or alone, but
withall prayes for a free
spirit, *Establish me with thy
free spirit:* that is a spirit
of ingenuity, which is
kindly, sweetly and free-
ly wrought upon: there-
fore when we have a free
spirit wrought in us,
then that free love that is
in God towards us will
worke most kindly upon

it, and constraines us to love him that loved us first. The love of Christ constrains us, 2. Cor. 5. 14. Because we thus judge, that if Christ died for all, then they which live should not live unto themselves but unto him that died for them: S. Paul gives the reason, why this love of Christ did thus constrain him, because hee did thus judge, that is, this consideration of Christs love, hee having a principle of love in his heart to Christ, hee found to be a powerfull prevailing reason to perswade him to live to Christ. Having a new judgement hee saw force and strength in the argument. And so shall we

we if we thus judge, and it will have this naturall consequence as naturally to follow upon it in our hearts, as any reason in any other kinde hath, that is brought to enforce any other conclusion. And therefore as the minde is *constrained* (as it were) to assent to a truth proved by force of reason, that if you grant this, then this or that will follow: so because we judge this reasonable by an argument drawne out of *loves Topics*, that if Christ died for all, who otherwise must themselves have died, that then they should live to him, this will *constraine* us to love him, and live to him.

Amor

*Amor Dei est extaticus, nec
se finit esse sui iuris.*



The case
of relapsing
into the
same sinne
after peace
spoken,
resolved.

THis Text and admonition here gives a just occasion to consider a little of that so often questioned case of Conscience concerning relapses of Gods Children into the same *sinnes* and folly againe, and whether after peace spoken, Gods people may returne againe to folly. Some have held, that a man after a second repentance could not fall into the same *sinne* again: others if he did, it excluded him from mercy for time to come. For the comfort

comfort of some poore
soules whose case and ren-
tation this may be, I will
speake somewhat though
sparingly and with cau-
tion.

1. The Scripture no
where excludeth those
from the state of grace, or
barrs mercy from those,
that have relapsed into
the same *sinne*, especially
so long as in regard of the
manner of their *sinning* it
be but folly, not wicked-
nesse or wilfull *sinning*,
that is, rather proceeding
out of errour of under-
standing, and heat, and
impetuousnesse of foolish
affections, then obstina-
cie and malice in the will,
and with *despite of the Spi-*
rit

rit of grace, Heb. 10. 27.

Yea: 2. In Scripture wee meet with such passages and promises, as may undoubtedly uphold any soule, that hath so fallen after peace received, into the same sinne, and preserve him from apprehending himselfe excluded therefore from mercy and the state of grace: As *Hosea 14. 4. I will heale their backslidings, I will love them freely*; unlesse they had fallen after repenting & former healing, it could not have been called backsliding, and yet this hee promises to heale, & withall shewes the ground that mooved him to it, his loving them freely:

freely : for if in any thing his free love is shewne to any of his children and drawne out , it is in healing againe such a back-sliding soule after recovery and peace given. For the falling into the same *sinne*, which hath been repented of and healed, provokes God more then a thousand other acts of *sinnes* formerly committed though of the same kind. And therein also to shew his free love, that he can pardon even the abuse of love it selfe, he leaves some thus to *sinne* after his love shed abroad in their hearts. Some hee shewes his free love unto, in keeping them from *sinning*,

sinning, others in pardon-
ing them, and giving them
repentance : they are but
severall wayes of drawing
it forth; so that if in any
thing, herein his free-love
is shewne, for if it were
not free, it would never
endure it selfe to bee abu-
sed. And likewise the sure
mercies of *David* are then
showne, when God *multi-
plies to pardon*: so *Esay* 55.
3. having mentioned the
promise of the *sure mer-
cies of David*, He promi-
ses to *multiply to pardon*, as
it is in the Originall, *verse*
7 : which are thus joined,
both because the surenesse
of his Covenant, is there-
in shewne, and because
wee might haply multi-
ply

ply to sinne; and at least it
supposeth the possibility
of it againe. God likewise
runs upon such a supposi-
tion in that expression of
his, to his owne people,
Iere. 3. 1, 2. They say if a
man put away his wife, and
shee becomes another mans,
shall not the Land be greatly
polluted? but thou hast played
the harlot with many lo-
vers, yet returne againe to
me, saith the Lord. Hee
speakes to her as to one,
had been his Wife, who
though shee had not been
put away by him, but had
put away her selfe and
run away, not once but
often, and that with ma-
ny lovers, and sometimes
in the midst of her whore-
domes,

domes, had come in and made challenge of his former love and pleaded his former mercy to her, and yet fallen back againe *verse 4.5.* (where he adds, *Wilt thou not from this time cry, My Father, and thou art the guide of my youth,* that is, I know sayes God, you will come now and cry as heretofore you have done and say, Oh thou art my Father and my Husband, and confidently still claim an interest in me upon my former kindnesse, and yet *doe as evill as you can,* for you cannot doe worse then thus to abuse my love) yet for all this at the *12.verse,* *Returne thou back-sliding Israel,* saith the Lord,

Lord, for I am married to you, *verse 14.* That which hee doth thus to a nation, hee may doe to a particular man who is his child.

Againe, 3. There are not altogether examples wanting for this.

1. Wee finde *Sampson* *Examp. 1*
a godly man (whom yet wee would scarce have thought such but that we find his name in the list of those Worthies, *Heb. 11.*) ensnared with a *Philistine* woman against the counsel of his parents, *Judg. 14.*
3. who clearely laid open his sinne to him, and hee was in the event reprovved for his folly, for his wife deceived him, told his

his riddle to his enemies which hee in the end perceived, and further to reprove him, in the issue shee was given away to another, *verse 16, 17, 20* from all which passages of reproofe, an holy man that had his eyes in his head, could not but see his errour; and yet againe a long while after this, (twenty yeres after, *Iudz. 15. 20.* (when certainly ere that hee had repented of this his *sinne*, for which his parents before, and after, God so clearely did rebuke him,) hee went to Gaza, *Iudz. 16. verse 1. and saw a harlot and went in to her*, and there scaped narrowly with his life at midnight,

night. And *verse* 4. After that also it came to passe hee fell in love with another, as bad as any of the former, *Dalilah*, who was his ruine. But his returning thus to folly cost him deare, for in the end he was taken as a Captive to the *Philistims* his enemies, & that through her false-hood, deprived of his strength he had spent upon these women, had his eyes those betraying lights put out, that had ensnared him, and himselfe made a foole of, to make his enemies sport. So as no child of God can take any great encouragement thus to returne to folly, for the future, by his

his example, though comfort they may have therefrom in case they have returned for the time past.

Examp. 2

2. Another example may be that of *Iebeshaphat* who committed a great sinne in joyning with *Ahab* that wicked King that sold himselfe to worke wickednesse, 2.Chron. 18. 1, 2, 3. and hee was foretold what would bee the successe of that confederacy and journey by *Michaiab* before he went with him to battell, and after in the battell it selfe, where hee hardly escaped with his life, and by an extraordinary providence at his prayer was delivered, verse

31, 32. and as if that were not sufficient, God sends another Prophet to him, *Chap. 19. 2.* who with open mouth reproves him and discovers to him his *sinne*, *Shouldest thou helpe the ungodlie, and love them that hate the Lord? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the Lord:* which message to so good a man doubtlesse was not in vaine, but humbled him for that his sin, and wrought repentance in him to avert that wrath. And yet after that great and miraculous deliverance of him and his people, *Chap. 20.* we finde him relapsing into the same sin, *ver. 35.* *After this did Iehoshaphat joyne himselfe*

selfe with *Abaziah* King of *Israel* who did very wickedly, and he joyned himselfe with him to make ships to goe to *Tarshish*: which another Prophet in like manner reprooveth, and likewise God himselfe rebuked by the like ill successe of that league to the former, the ships were broken, *verse 37.*

3 Saint *Peter* a man, who seemed by other of his cariages, bold enough, was yet three severall times surprized with base feare: once when hee tempted Christ, not to hazard himselfe at *Ierusalem*, where Christ had told him, that he was to suffer:

Math. 16. 21, 22, 23. Ma-

ster

ſter (ſayes hee) ſpare thy ſelfe: upon which ſpeech Chriſt calls him, *Satan*, rebuketh him more ſharply, then at any other time, for which ſurely there was a more then ordinary cauſe. *Saint Peter* thought that if his Maſter ſhould ſuffer at *Jeruſalem*, that himſelfe, and the reſt ſhould not be ſafe: That ſpeech therefore proceeded from feare, and therefore Chriſt doth immediately thereupon call for ſelfe-deniall, and taking up the Croſſe, *verſe* 24. And this was immediately after peace ſpoken, *verſe* 16, 17, 18. CHRIST had never more comfortably given testimony to

Q.

Saint

Saint *Peter*, and his *faith*, then there. Yet againe, after this Christ had him up into the Mount and transfigured himselfe, to hearten him against that tryall to come, which made him so confident; yet then hee denied him, at his arraignment: when againe Christ immediately upon that lookt back upon him with so sweet a looke as broke his heart for this his folly; and so he returned againe, and it cost him many a tear; and Christ after the Resurrection, owned him againe, more then any of the rest, bad them that first met him, *Goe tell Peter*, Hee mentions him by name, and

and in especiall, goe tell him the first newes of it: and then also hee asked him, *Peter, lovest thou me?* and hee said, *Lord, thou knowest I love thee*: as if he had said, Though I have played the wretch, yet *I love thee*: upō this, though hee grew more bold, *Acts* 4.12. yet *Gal.* 2.11, 12. we finde him falling into the grudgings of the same disease, which cast him into another fitt, hee *dissembled*, *fearing them of the Circumcision*: this was a spice of the former sinne, though not so grosse; and though the outward acts in these sinnes were diuers in their occasions, yet they were all acts and

buds of the same root of bitterneſſe; and may as well bee called ſins of the ſame kind, as the committing differing acts of uncleanneſſe, are reckoned falling into the ſame ſinne.

In the fourth place, if the Scriptures had beene utterly ſilent in examples, yet reaſon conſonant to other principles, and grounds of Divinity, and of the Scriptures might perſwade the ſame.

Reaſ. I.

1. If hee may after the moſt ſerious, and through repentance fall againe, into as grievous a ſinne of another kind, and returne: why not into the ſame againe? I confeſſe there
is

is some disparity, which might make him more averse, and set him in some more remotenesse, from the same *sinne* he hath particularly repented of, then another; which shall bee considered in its place. Yet, the difference, cannot bee supposed such, as should make the one possible, and not the other: all true repentance working the heart, to an abominating every *sinne*, as well as any; and therefore if it were true, it was for that particular *sinne*, as *sin*; and then it would worke the like against all, and every *sinne*, according to the measure of the *sinfulness*; and though it may,

and doth worke a more keen, and speciall hatred against that particular *sin*, a man hath beene most stung with, yet still, this is but so farre, as this aggravation, (*to fall into the same sinne againe*,) may cause such a relapse, to bee more finfull then another *sinne*: and so farre, and upon that ground he is, and may bee more set and strengthened against it, then against another *sinne*. But then, if the supposition fall upon another grosse *sinne*, never before committed, the sole and single act of which, other circumstances make as heynous, even as this reiterated act of a *sinne* formerly

merly committed, can be; then the one is equally as possible as the other. But however yet still the difference, is but in degrees; namely in that the heart is clongated a degree, or so, further from that sinne formerly committed, then any other: which will not therefore so vary the case, (as *magis & minus* doe not) that it should bee made impossible to fall into the one, and not into the other.

2. *Reason*: If he may fall into some grosse sin, which at first conversion, hee did above all other humble himselfe for; and yet, *that same initiaall repentance*, did not put him

Reas. 2.

into such an impossibility of falling into that sinne againe : Why then should a renewed act of repentance for the same, or for some other reiterated sin, be supposed to have such vertue in it, as to make him shot-free for ever, from the same fiery dart againe?

Reas. 3.

Againe thirdly : Let it be considered, frō whence it should be, that a renewed, or indeed any act of true repentance, though never so great, and intense, should have such a transcendent, eternall, and invincible vertue in it, and priviledge annexed to it; for how is it, that repentance doth streng-

then

then us against sinne, but by restoring the decayed frame of Grace, to a better constitution and greater degree of strength then before; and by raising it, above a mans lusts, and above that lust, more then all other? as in *David*, when hee prayed, *Create in me a cleane heart*, which, through his sinne of uncleannesse, was in an especiall manner, defiled with a pronenesse to that sin: But yet withall remember, that, *that* new frame of heart, & strength gotten by that renewed repentance, and *that* augmentation, and increase of hatred against, and abominating that

sinne wrought by it, is all but a creature; as grace, and every new degree of Grace is: and therefore for preserving us, hath in it selfe but the power, and force of a created habit, which may bee prevailed against, by the sin that is in us; and can no more, nay much lesse put us into a state of confirmation against any particular sin, then the grace of the Angels could of it selfe confirme them in a state against all sinne. And as for the impression of that bitterness, which in our repentance for that sin fallen into, was made upon our hearts: that also can bee supposed to have but the

the like force upon our spirits, *that* the impressi-
on of joy ~~resistible~~ *resistible* and
glorious, hath upon the
heart in those heavenly
raptures, which beleevers
sometimes enjoy; yea
and the latter of these
will easily be supposed to
be of the greater efficacie
of the two; and both but
creatures: Now those ra-
vishing joyes, are not yet
such immortall and ever-
lastingly quickning cor-
dialls, that put such spirits
into a man, as to preserve
him from swoonds, and
faintings of spirit for e-
ver: and though, whilst
they abide and are pre-
sent to the heart, they do
then raise it above all
things

things here below : yet when a man hath beene a while off from that Mount, and hath conversed a while with things here againe below ; then that lustre weares away, as the glory that shined in *Moses* face did ; and after a while, the sense and present tast of those joyes weares out ; and when that is gone, the bare remembrance of the which is left, hath not in their absence, such an infallible, though a great efficacy to preserve his minde in an everlasting disrelishing former delights ; but that hee may, and often doth fall in love againe too too much with them :
although

although indeed whilst the present sense of them did abide upon the heart, it abstracted the minde from all things here below. And hence a man is apt to fall from his first love, Rev. 2. and from that high esteeme of spirituall things; as the Galatians, Gal. 4. 15. *Where is the blessednesse you spake of,* sayes Saint Paul to them? therefore answerably the remembrance of the bitterness of any sin felt in our deepest humiliations, is much lesse able to preserve a man, nor is the impression and dint made so lasting, nor the scarres and wounds of conscience continuing for ever so

so fresh, as everlastingly to preserve and deterre us from falling into the same *sinne* againe. For both are but creatures, and at best but arguments drawne from sense, and experience within our selves, and have but an humane created power which is not alwayes efficacious; especially seeing **G O D** hath ordained us *to live by faith, more then by sense*, for faith is appointed by God to be our more constant keeper, *1. Pet. 1. 5. We are kept through faith unto salvation*, and by it more surely and more constantly then by impressions of joy, or sorow which are made to sense: and yet wee

wee are not kept by it of
it selfe, but by *the power* of
God: so then, wee are
kept by *the power of God* as
the principall supporter,
and guardian, *through faith*
as the instrumentall, and
by it rather then by sense
or any other grace of sor-
row or repentance; be-
cause faith carries the heart
out of it selfe, and com-
mits it selfe wholly into
the hands of God as a
faithfull Creator (who is
the strength of Israel, to
keepe a man from *everie*
evill worke,) as not being
able to secure it selfe a-
gainst any sin through the
power of any fortificati-
on, or strength that any
other grace or degree of
grace

grace hath built, no not for one moment; and therefore is as dependant upon God after a fall, and a renewed repentance out of it, yea and more then before hee fell, and his owne wofull experience hath reason to make him so. The like instance to illustrate the truth of this wee may draw from the assurance of faith it selfe. For even the assurance of faith it selfe, (which is an act properly belonging to that grace, called therefore *the assurance of faith*, Heb. 10. 22.) which doth strengthen us as much against doubting when it is joyned with joy unspeakable and glorious, as repen-

repentance can do against
any other *sinne* : and
whilest it is upon us, in
the streng. of it a belee-
ver is apt to thinke him-
selfe armed and strengthe-
ned, and so establisht, as
that hee shall never que-
stion Gods love any
more, or the pardon of
his *sinnes* : and yet, expe-
rience shewes it, that the
guilt of sinne prevailes
sometimes againe, after
this, and the same doubts
arise, and prevaile as much
as ever ; neither will the
remembrance of the for-
mer assurance be alwayes
of force enough to resist
them ; for hee may come
to question that assurance
it selfe also ; and so for-
get

get that hee was purged from his old sinnes. And if the guilt of sin prevaile in the Conscience againe, against such a renewed and settled act of faith, why may not the power of a lust prevaile in the members, after a renewed act of repentance?

Reas. 4.

4. If it be said, that a renewed act of thorow repentance doth keepe a man, not by any peculiar vertue in it selfe alone, but by the power of God concurrent with it: Then I demand to see the promise wherein God hath infallibly obliged and ingaged his power, upon such a renewed act of repentance, to preserve from
falling

falling into that sinne of
all other for ever; with-
out which no man in faith
can affirme it; and with-
out which there is an *it*
may bee, and a supposition
of such a possibility, as
sometime falleth out, and
is reduced to existence.
G O D indeed hath said,
that *if we fall, hee will put*
under his hand, to breake
that fall that it shall not
ruine us; but not so to
keep us in his hands, as we
shall bee out of danger of
falling againe. A renewed
act of repentance is in-
deed an ordinance sancti-
fied to preserve a man;
yet, but in the same maner
that other ordinances are,
as Prayer, and the word
preacht,

preacht, and admonition,
 &c. with which G O D
 doth not alwayes so in-
 fallibly cooperate, as effi-
 cacionfly to worke al-
 wayes that which they
 serve to.

5. If there were not
 such a possibility, as might
 and doth sometimes fall
 out; then every regene-
 rate man, after such a re-
 newed act of repentance,
 might secure himselfe
 against the committing
 that grosse act againe for
 ever; but so he can never
 doe against any particular
 act of sinne, but that
 sinne against the Holy
 Ghost. Saint Paul there-
 fore exhorts, when a
 brother is fallen into a
 sinne,

sinne, to restore such an one with the spirit of meeknesse; upon this consideration, considering thy selfe, lest thou also bee tempted; and hee layes the exhortation upon those who are most spirituall; Tee that are spirituall, restore such an one, considering thy selfe lest thou also be tempted, Gal. 6. 1. so as hee speakes of such, as have their hearts raised up to the best frame, through the most deepe, and ferious repentance: and now wee will suppose one, that hath formerly fallen himselfe into the same sinne, which another is fallen into, but not yet restored, but himselfe is returned by

by repentance out of it: (for indeed, such a spirituall man, is of all other like to bee the meekest bone-setter of a man fallen,) & even such doth Saint *Paul* exhort to consider, that themselves may for the time to come, be also or in like manner tempted, that is, fall as this man fell; and therefore *so bee tempted* as to fall into the same sinne againe, that he was fallen into. And if any man could bee secure from the like fall againe, hee had beene out of the reach of this exhortation to this duty upon that ground mentioned, as not capable of it. But the Holy Ghost hath elsewhere, *1. Cor. 10.*

13. told us, that there is no temptation which is common to man, but is incident to befall any man, at any time; and therefore verse 12, exhorts him that standeth, to take heed lest he fall: indeed, that temptation which is common to Devils with men, the sinne of finall despaire, and against the holy Ghost, &c. a regenerate man may through the grace of Christ, secure himselfe against: but, all such sinnes as are common to man, from these or any of them, no man in any state, can without an extraordinary revelation, secure himselfe from the commission of.

Onely I adde these
Cautions

Cautions concerning this case.

1. *Cautio*

1. There are *two* sorts of corruptions. First, more grosse corruptions, which Saint Peter calls, *iniquitates carnis*, the defilements of the world, 2. Pet. 2. 20. they being the common mire, or kennell, wherein the unclean swine of this world wallow, and which the Apostle calls such *workes of the flesh as are manifest*, Gal. 5. 19. even to the light of Nature; such as are adultery, fornication, drunkenness, &c. and by those two expressions doe they distinguish them from a sort of more spirituall and refined lusts. For secondly,

ly, there are corruptions more Spirituall, as pride, secret love of the world. Now, for those grosse corruptions, which are contrary, even to common honesty, and (to use *Iobs* phrase) *are punished by the Iudges, 31. Iob 11.* which profane men wallow in, a godly man hath more strength against them, so as it is not so ordinary for him to bee entangled againe and againe with these; for where but morall principles are, these are abstained from, as we see in the Pharisee, *I am no adulterer, &c.* therefore, where grace is, much more. And some *sinnes* are more opposite to the spi-

R

rit

rit of holinesse, and lesse compatible with grace, as uncleannesse, of which Saint Paul sayes, God hath not called us to uncleannesse, but to holinesse, 1 *Thes.* 4. 7. it is in an especiall manner, there opposed to holinesse: and such as these are works of the flesh which are manifest, even to Nature, to civill men: and therefore when they are often fallen into, they doe manifest, that the heart is but flesh. And although the limits, how seldome or how often, cannot bee set concerning relapses into these, or any sinnes; yet, in an ordinary course it may be said, that few godly men fall into such sinnes

finnes againe and againe: God keepes them from such in an ordinary providence, that scandalls should not arise: they being finnes which all the world takes notice of. But those other finnes of rash anger, and love of the world, and spirituall pride, &c. these being lesse manifest, and sitting more close to our spirits, godly men are more subject unto.

Yet secondly: we must againe distinguish.

1. There are the inward lustings to those outward acts: now, though grace weakeneth the very lustings within, yet, takes them not wholly away:

The spirit that is in us, (that is,) in us Saints, sayes S. James, lusteth to envy : and as to envy, so to all other finnes.

And secondly, there are the outward grosse acts of such sins ; and therein the weaknesse of sin in a regenerate man, and strength of grace shewes it selfe most in preserving from them : for, as *to will* is present with me saies S. Paul *to will what is good, yet how to performe it I am not able,* Rom. 7. 18. So on the contrary, *to lust* the heart may bee ready, and *lust* may soone rise up in rebellion, but when it should come to the act, there is a weaknesse discovered ;

covered; they come to the birth, and want strength often to bring forth; the contrary lusting and prevailing of grace being then seene and discovering it selfe: that it fareth with a regenerate man in this case often as with a man that is deadly wounded, who riseth up to strike his enemy, and thinkes to runne him thorow, but sinks downe againe, *medio conatu*, when his sword is at his enemies breast, through a deficiency of spirits; or as a man in a Palsey, or the Gout, who thinks hee is able to walke, til he comes to try, and then he finds a weaknesse which makes him

fall backe againe : Thus, even when the whole forces of lusts are mustred up, yet the weapons fall out of their hands. Humours in a healthfull constitution, may stirre, and boake in the stomacke, when yet they come not up, nor prevaile unto vomiting. In that place afore named, *Gal. 5.* the Apostle seemes not to deny but that in the most regenerate, lustings may arise, for *the flesh* (sayes he) *lusteth against the spirit*, ver. 17. but yet, as for outward acts, he tels them, *verse 16.* *That if they walke in the spirit*, that is, in the prevalency of the spirit, keeping up a holy frame of heart

heart above the flesh, that then yee shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh: for that frame of heart so kept up, will hinder the outward fulfilling of the lust; which is never done till flesh and corruption is actually raised above the spirit, & gets more voyces to carry it; till the spirit be under hatches, and the flesh above, and so steeres the helme: otherwise the lusting of the spirit against the flesh, will hinder the outward doing, and fulfilling of a lust. For the reason hee gives, *verse 17. so as you cannot doe what you would,* implies, that not onely lustings, which arise without consent, may be

in such a man but further, much of the will may bee wonne to consent to them, to like them; when yet there is not strength enough to carry it on to the outward act; *you cannot doe what you would.* And what those works of the flesh are, which are manifest workes of the flesh, and which Christians whilst they walke in the Spirit fulfill not, hee mentions and reckons up in the following words. And this is the more ordinary frame of a Christians heart; for verse 24. (sayes hee) *they that are Christs have crucified the affections and lusts, that is, so farre, as not to fulfill them.*

3. He may more easily fall into a grosse *sinne* of another kinde, then into the same after speciall repentance for it, and peace spoken in the pardon of it. Because true repentance especially fortifies the heart against that *sin* which a man hath most repented him of; and sincerity lies more in watching over that *sinne* then any other: so sayes David, *Psal. 18. I was upright, and kept my selfe from mine iniquity*, that especiall *sinne* which was eminently his *sinne*. A mans arme that hath beene broke, will, if well set, rather breake in some other place then where it was broke at the

first. Hence sometimes it falls out, that that which was a godly mans boosome sinne before conversion, continues not to be so after : but, another steps up in the roome of it, by reason that hee then endevoureth to wash out that great staine, most ; and spendeth the most of the Fullers sope, to purge himselfe from it ; and so becomes, ever after, most watchfull over it ; and sers in this his weakest place, the strongest garrison, and a watch, to prevent the enemy. And, as an act of some presumptuous *sinne*, though it inclines the heart more to all *sinne*, then before, yet, especially,

ly, to commit that kinde of *sinne* againe, rather then any other: so on the contrary, is it in a sound and solemne repentance, for some especiall *sinne*; and in the endeavouring, to mortifie some especiall member of the body of *sinne*: (to mortifie which, not only in the bulke and generall, but also particularly and apart in the severall members of it, the *Holy Ghost* exhorts, *Colos.* 3.5.) though thereby, the whole habit of the body of *sinne* is purged and weakned, yet that particular *sinne* which we aime especially to have mortified, is through Gods blessing more subdued then
any

any other. We see Idolatry, was the *sinne* which the people of Israel relapsed into, againe and againe; yet when they were once thoroughly humbled by the Captivity for it, they never returned to it, of all *sinnes* else, not to this day: so as it may bee said, as was foretold, haply in another case, *Ezek. 16. 43.* *Thou shalt not commit this lewdnesse of all thy abominations: Ionah,* though he would haply never runne away from God againe, after his Gaole delivery out of the *Whales* belly; yet, immediately after peace spoken to his heart hee falls into a *sin* of another

cher kinde ; into a passion of extreme anger and peevishnesse, and quarrelling against God. And the reason of this especiall tendernesse to fall into the same sinne, is, because the Conscience lookes upon a relapse into that sinne, to bee more hainous, then into any other sinne of another kind ; because of that aggravation of it, which thereby would staine and die it : and although a sinne of another kind shewes the variety of corruption more ; yet, this is more against the power and worke of repentance it selfe, which was particularly exercised about that sinne : and also

also breaks, and dissolveth all bands of a mans vows, covenants, prayers, &c. made against it in particular, and so is made more grievous. And this wee may see in *Ezraes* humbling himselfe for that great sinne of the people, in joyning themselves in marriage with the people of the land, when hee did set himselfe to humble himselfe for them, together with those that feared God, Chap. 9. 4. What an hideous apprehension of the hainousnesse of that sinne, if they should again fall into it, did that dayes repentance raise his heart up unto? as appears v. 14. *Should we againe breake thy*
com-

commandements, and joyn in
affinity with them, wouldst
thou not destroy us, till thou
hadst consumed us, and till
there was no escaping? Into
which sinne, yet, the peo-
ple did againe fall, after
they had repented of it,
with a solemne confession
and promise of amend-
ment, which is recorded,
Chap. 10. v. 11, 12. &c. yet
they returned to it againe
the second time, as wee
finde in *Malachie*, who li-
ved the last of the Pro-
phets, and after this pray-
er of *Ezra*. For *Chap. 2. 12.*
the Prophet sayes, *An abo-
mination is committed in Je-
rusalem, for Iuda hath mar-
ryed the daughter of a
strange god: and then fol-
lowes*

lowes the aggravation, v.
13. *I haue done again,*
that is, the second time,
and in that respect are
challenged to deale trea-
cherously; and that also in
respect they had repented
of it the first time, *cover-*
ring the Altar with teares,
with weeping, and crying
out, as Malachie there
speakes: so as God regar-
deth not your offerings any
more. And therefore also
Psal. 78. 40. *How oft did they*
(saith hee, as aggravating
their sins) by murmuring
provoke the Lord? and
Numb. 14. 22. *God reckons*
up, and mentions the
times of their sinning,
how often they had thus
sinned, as an aggravation
of

of them, *They have tempted me these ten times.*

4. He may fall into the same sinne againe and againe, untill hee hath recovered himselfe, and his peace fully by a thorough repentance, but yet seldome after. *Let* committed incest two nights together; but the orifice of his lust, was not yet stopped by repentance; the wound was not closed, and so bled againe afresh; but when it is healed once, and the heart made perfect with God, and divorced from that sinne, and entred into Communion with God againe; then though it may fall out, yet a man more hardly

4. *Cantib*

hardly returnes. A woman that is gone from her husband may play the whore a long while with him she ran away withall, till her husband fetches her again: but to run often away, after receiving again, is intolerable. That is not so ordinary in Gods childe.

5. *Cantio*

5. Though we can hardly set limits to say when, or when not, this shall fall out from the degrees of mens repentings: as that if they have such or such a degree of repentance, then they fall no more: yet we may further consider a difference of their returnings to God, & repentings; and of Gods speaking

speaking peace.

1. *Of their Repentings:*
some are more imperfect,
and but as it were thaw-
ings of the minde a little,
by meanes of a little Sun-
shine of Gods love: some,
are more thorow and
deep; that recover a man,
and put him into a sound
and healthfull estate. As
for example, a man in an
ague hath well dayes, yet
his fits returne, and it may
be they leave him for a
month or so; and yet they
take him againe, as at
Spring and Autumne;
which is because all this
while his body is not tho-
rowly recovered to a state
of health: so is it with a
mans heart in respect of
his

his lusts; though he may have many well dayes, wherein hee may eat his meate, and receive sweetnesse in the word, and ordinances: yet at times his distempers and aguish fits returne, he being aguish still; but in the end, after the peace of God hath more thoroughly established his heart, he attaines to some settled constant victory over it; and when it doth not prevaile to victory, such aguish fits end usually in consumptions, in which long agues often end: as in Temporaries, in whom, sinne overcoming G O D S striving with them, it eates all good beginnings out;

out; but if they belong to GOD, then usually that aguish distemper, is in the end by a more thorough repentance, so healed, as that they attaine to more victory, and security against it then any other sinne; that as in those other kind of tentations, it often falls out, that, that which a man doubted of most, hee comes in the end to bee most assured of, and to doubt no more; so also here, a man becomes most freed from that sinne, hee was long exercised with of all other. So also

2. For Gods dealings with his, there is much difference therein to bee found:

found : there are some kinds of speaking peace by God, and meltings of the heart of his people, which, yet are not of that force as to overcome, but wherein God doth but (as it were) strive with them ; which strivings doe ever and anon worke their hearts to a repentance, and that true, and serious : which yet is not so deepe, and thorough, nor so healing the heart at the bottome, as it should. For G O D sometimes useth more imperfect kinde of strivings, even with his own children, about some particular sinne they are to leave, which doe not so fully, at first prevaile, and over.

overcome in them; which God doth, to let them see the running issue of their natures, how grace would runne out at it, (as the Apostle speakes) and overcome grace in them, if hee should let it alone: and so, lets out upon his child after many yeeres some lust, which had been long downe, which puts him to it exceedingly, so that he is in hazzard to bee undone, and is put into feares of it; and yet God visiteth his spirit by fits, and *per intervalla* at times strives with him; and though hee falls, yet hee puts under his hand, and gives him well daye, and some comfortable visitations;

Heb. 2. 1.

tions; yet such as are not deep enough to worke him fully off from it. For, as God strives with wicked men, so he sometimes strives with his own also; which may seeme to bee the true meaning of that speech, *Gen. 6.* where, having mentioned the sinne of his owne children, *ver. 2.* That the Sonnes of God tooke to them wives of that wicked seed of *Cain*, hee sayes, *My Spirit shall not alwayes strive with man, for that [he also] is but flesh :* Hee meanes not this, of all mankinde, for he sayes, *[hee also]* is but flesh : now, with what other creatures, doth hee joyne them in this comparison,

parison, but with others of the sonnes of men? so as the meaning is, I see my Children, that they also are corrupt, and degenerate as well as the rest of mankind, and my Spirit hath striven with them. In which striving, G O D lets them see, how if hee did not in the end, shew foorth his free love to the full, in the rescuing of them, and healing their backsliding, they would bee undone: so as, in the end, through his grace which is sufficient, they obtaine the greatest conquest, over that lust of any other; when the heart is once thoroughly awakened, and settled in a tho-

S

row

row peace. And as, those doubts they were most troubled with once, (which though they had at times some light against, yet by fits did still arise) are yet in the end, so overcome, as they arise no more, but they enjoy the greatest freedom from them: So is it often herein. And these *strivings to not overcoming*, I resemble to the thawings of the Ice, in a great frost, as when in the day time, the Sunne shines, and in the Sunshine it thaweth a little: but yet, so as at night, or in the shade it freezeth; when sometimes, the weather also begins to change for a night, and yet falls a freezing

freeing againe: so here,
there is not such a tho-
row shedding abroad the
love of God in the heart,
as should make a thorow
generall thaw, to the pur-
pose as wee say; and so,
when the heat of that is
withdrawen, it freezeth
againe: but in the end
there comes a more tho-
row and generall thaw,
and change that carries all
away, melts the heart, and
so alters the temper and
constitution of the wea-
ther, (as I may so speake)
as it freezeth no more.
And such a thawing of his
heart had *David*, when
Nathan came to him, and
not afore; though it may
bee hee had those lesser

relentings often before.

But let those that are in such a case, take heed they bee not hardened thorow the deceitfulnesse of sinne, and of all the times, that passe over you, in your lives, these are the most climacteriall, and criticall, and most dangerous. For God will not alwayes strive, but if thou beest his childe, if such thawings will not do it, hee will use some great afflictions, in the end to divorce the heart, and thy sin; his love will one way or other, overcome thee, and in the end prevaile. As when Israel went on stubbornely in the way of his heart, (sayes God) I have seene his wayes and will heale him

him and guide him, Esay 57.
& the Lord may so heale thee, as those lusts of all other shall not in that grosse maner, breake forth any more. And in those times, when God dealeth thus with him, a man will after say, that in such passages of his life, hee had more free love spent on him, then in all his life time, before or after : and when he is freed and healed, he will be more thankful, and fearefull then ever before, or then otherwise he would have been; and so get ground by his stumblings. If any of you, being now in such a conflict as this, in such a vicissitude and chance of war:

If yet thou findest a constant fight against thy sin; and that those breakings, and meltings of thy heart by God, do winne ground of it; and that the comforts, and hope, which at times are vouchsafed, doe strengthen, & stablish thy heart in well doing: as 2. *Thess.* 2. ult; and makes thee more fearefull, every time thou risest, then ever; so as to looke upon another fit if it should come, (which knowing the deceitfulnesse of the heart, thou fearest,) as the fit of some great sicknesse, lest it should returne againe; esteeming it as the greatest crosse that can befall thee; which
thou

thou wouldest buy off
with thy blood; and blee-
dest most of all to thinke,
that thou hast so uncon-
stant a heart, which as it
hath abused Gods love
formerly; so thou fearest,
will doe so againe; if thus
thou go on to fight it out,
the love of God wil! in
the end overcome in thee;
but if thou findest that
those encouragements fro
God, do through thy cor-
ruption, (which turnes
Gods grace into wanton-
nesse) nourish thy lusts,
and make thee lesse feare-
full against the next time;
and thy heart harder, and
secure, and to slight sinne
more, because thou hast
beene so oft visited from

on high, and pardoned: thy case is dangerous, and may prove desperate.

6. Though he may returne, yet not presently: *Luke 5. last. Hee that hath tasted old wine, doth not straightway drinke, and desire new: not whilest the love of God, and the tast, and relish of it is fresh in his mouth: when the impression is worne out indeed, and begins to bee forgotten, then haply he may returne.*

Vse.

To conclude with the use of this point; If it be folly to runne into the same sinne, though we repent of it afterwards: then, what folly is it in them that utterly fall away

way? and after they have beene enlightened, and tasted of the good word of God, then fall againe to the pleasures of sinne and never repent of them? as many doe; that come, and try a little, what is in religion, and the wayes of God, and then returne againe to their vomits, and never returne to piety againe. Foolish soules, who hath bewitched you? are yee so foolish, that having begun in the spirit, yee end in the flesh? as Gal. 3. 3. Folly indeed: to spend the harvest of your time, in seeking God, and then to leave him, when you are about to take leave of the pleasures of sinne. Alas poore

poore soules, whither will yee goe? doe you ever thinke to have such a God againe? *Thou hast the words of everpall life*, said the Disciples to Christ: and as *Saul* said to his servants, to keep them from falling away unto *David*; *Can the sonne of Iesse give you vineyards, and make you Captaines of thousands?* *1. Sam. 22. 7*: So, can the world give you that peace, that I can give you, may Christ say to you; yea and heaven besides hereafter? Is the devill, with all the wages of sinne, you post after, able to make you amends? you thereby dishonour God in returning to sinne,
and

and bring an evill report upon the good land; and discredit your Master, in changing your service; but withall you befoole your selves most: you *returne to folly*. For even that, which you thinke to gaine, the worlds good word and opinion by, even that you lose: for, though they make a spoile of you, and triumph in such, *and glory in their flesh a while*: yet they never inwardly think well of such a one; nor truely love him. A back-slider, is like luke-warne water, having been once heated, which good men spue out, and evill men regard not; for what use, can indeed bee made

made of it? *Like salt that hath lost its savour it is good for nothing, but the dunghill.* Like one that hath beene married, but lives divorced; she is undone for her marriage ever after. Such is the condition of those that fall away and repent not: You who have but turned unto folly and are not grown to a despising and despiting Gods wayes, *Returne, Oh Shulamite, returne.* And you that have peace and communion with God, take heed you do not lose him, you will never have such a God againe.

FINIS.

